

# NAB

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BAYREUTH

including  
**NEWS**  
FROM THE



## 5 Years of **Africa Multiple** Cluster of Excellence

### **Institute of African Studies Bayreuth**

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## Dear reader,

We are delighted to present the 22nd edition of News from the Institute of African Studies (NAB XXII). As usual, more things have happened than we can include in our limited number of pages, so we had to select our top picks from 2023.

As for the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, the highlight of the year was the annual conference on the theme of *Spatialities* held in a hybrid format at the University of Bayreuth (UBT) between 11 to 14 October. More than 500 registered participants attended a total of 34 panels and three keynotes, making it the largest Cluster event so far. The most prominent non-academic visitor to the Cluster was Svenja Schulze, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, who left visibly impressed after spending a few hours with us at Iwalewahaus in August 2023 to learn about the Cluster's research and related activities.

A veritable milestone for African Studies in Bayreuth was the laying of the foundation stone for the Federal and Bavarian state-funded "Research Centre Society, Technology and Ecology in Africa – Challenges in the 21st Century" (FZA) by Markus Blume, the Bavarian Minister for Science and the Arts, in March 2023. The 4,500 m<sup>2</sup> top-notch facility will house the IAS and other institutions that are part of the African Studies focus area at the University of Bayreuth from 2025 onwards, including the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, BIGSAS, the Bayreuth Academy, EIMAS, and afriZert.

2023 saw the tenure of Eva Spies and Thoko Kaime as IAS Director and Deputy Director, respectively, coming to an end, with Gabriele Sommer and Stefan Ouma taking over the respective offices at the start of the winter semester 2023–2024.

Since 2022, the IAS has made great strides in increasing its visibility to reposition itself as the prime locus of African Studies in Bayreuth and beyond. We have completely revamped our website – take a look! We developed a new public engagement strategy, designed to make the manifold activities of our members more visible. We also decided to adopt more efficient strategies to tackle doorstep issues in the locality of Bayreuth. For instance, we raised the issue of racism, discrimination, and inclusivity by organising the event *Colonial Bayreuth and Why It Still Matters Today* as part of the University's prestigious *City Talks/Stadtgespräche*.

Based on the collaboration between Vice President of Internationalisation, Equal Opportunities, and Diversity, Nina Nestler, the IAS, and the City of Bayreuth, a Letter of Intent has been signed between the City and the University to reinforce the cooperation between the two, particularly with regard to diversity. In this framework, a first workshop for staff members of UBT and the City of Bayreuth has been organised together with the association Bayreuth ohne Gewalt (Violence-free Bayreuth).

2023 was also a year of big changes for Iwalewahaus, as Director Ulf Vierke took early retirement in July. The IAS is indebted to him for the great work he has done since 2010 to make Iwalewahaus such a vibrant internationally known space of creative exchange. His departure left a big gap, and we have since been working with University leadership to reorganise Iwalewahaus, rethinking its goals, ethics, and governance structure.

Despite turbulent times, Iwalewahaus staged stunning new exhibitions in 2023. In May, *Floating Assemblies* was opened, followed in September by the opening of an exhibition on *Mulala Landry – Popular Painting Between La Sape and Transhumanism*.

We are also pleased to report that 2023 saw an increase in student interest in afriZert, our interdisciplinary study programme which allows all Bavaria-based university students to do an additional certificate in African Studies. At the opening workshop at Iwalewahaus in November, many students showed interest in this innovative programme.



Gabriele Sommer



Stefan Ouma



Rüdiger Seesemann



Ute Fendler

**Gabriele Sommer** and **Stefan Ouma**  
(Director and Vice Director, Institute of African Studies)

**Rüdiger Seesemann** and **Ute Fendler**  
(Spokespersons, Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence)

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RECENT BOOK PUBLICATIONS

# 5 Years of Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence

Photo: Adobe Stock

Text and photo SABINE GREINER

**Established with the objective to re-configure African Studies, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth started its operations in 2019. Five years later, the great strides made in the implementation of its research agenda and the building of its network have put it on the path to reach its ambitious goal.**

In 2018, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence was selected in a highly competitive process as one of 57 Clusters of Excellence in the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments. Since its inception in January 2019, the Africa Multiple Cluster has made significant progress in its goal to reconfigure the field of African Studies. Based at the University of Bayreuth, the research initiative has developed a unique interdisciplinary approach to rethink traditional understandings of Africa and its global connections. Its conceptual framework shifts the focus from “Africa” as an entity that has connections towards the multiple relations that constitute heterogeneous and mutually influential African and African diasporic ways of life and world-making. The Cluster’s key concept of multiplicity is designed to capture the uniquely diverse and interconnected nature of African and African diasporic life-worlds as they

emerge in multi-layered processes of relating.

## Structural Innovations

Building on the long-standing tradition at the University of Bayreuth to do ‘research on Africa only with Africa’, from the very beginning the cornerstone of the Cluster’s strategy has been conducting research jointly with African academic partners. This is reflected in the Cluster’s unique structural composition. In addition to the headquarter at the University of Bayreuth, the Cluster operates through four independent African Cluster Centres (ACCs) located at the University of Lagos (Nigeria), Rhodes University in Makhanda (South Africa), Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Moi University in Eldoret (Kenya). This transcontinental structure evolved into an extraordinary research network of over 160 members and shifted the conventional power balance in African Studies by fostering more equitable partnerships between institutions on and outside of the continent. Scholars from the five institutions consistently collaborate on all levels: joint research projects, international academic events, early career support, the promotion of gender equity and diversity and pioneering digital research environment across Cluster locations.

In addition to establishing the African

Cluster Centres, the Africa Multiple Cluster has strengthened pre-existing and forged additional partnerships and networks with institutions across Africa, Europe, and the Americas. These collaborative efforts have further helped to develop a most productive transcontinental research environment, where scholars and institutions in and from Africa and the Global South more broadly work together in research, academic exchange, and collaborative publications, thus initiating new forms of knowledge production in African Studies.

## Conceptual framework and research

When the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence first commenced its research endeavours, it developed a conceptual framework for the study of multiplicity through four heuristic angles – modalities of relating, medialities, spatialities, and temporalities – to analyse the simultaneity of heterogeneous and mutually influential African and African-diasporic life-worlds. With this theoretical framing, a total of 72 interdisciplinary and transcontinental research projects have taken up their work on a wide range of topics. In the process, the Cluster has been instrumental in challenging conventional views that describe Africa in binary terms, like coloniser vs. colonised, developed vs. underdeveloped, North vs. South, modern vs. traditional, or

global vs. local. By positing multiplicity and relationality as concepts that recognise Africa as multiple and (globally) entangled, many of our research projects foregrounded epistemologies of the Global South, mobilised the African archive and integrated African languages and knowledge systems into their methodologies, thus contributing to overcoming the colonial legacy in knowledge production about Africa.

Conceived as a transformative space to study African and African diasporic ways of life via the pursuit of cutting-edge research and theory-building, the Africa Multiple Cluster has successfully established new inter- and transdisciplinary formats of research cooperation. To structure its research agenda, the Cluster was organised in six thematic Research Sections – Affiliations, Arts and Aesthetics, Knowledges, Learning, Mobilities, and Moralities – animated by the members of all Cluster locations representing a vast spectrum of academic disciplines and methodologies, thus creating unique research contexts that facilitated the production of synergies and added analytical value for the broader themes under study.

Through the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, the Africa Multiple Cluster launched a thriving international fellowship programme that attracted African Studies scholars from all over the world. The Bayreuth Academy also encouraged transdisciplinary collaboration between scholars and artists, which led to the creation of new working formats of public

engagement, knowledge transfer, and teaching.

## Events and Networking

Since its establishment in 2019, the Africa Multiple Cluster has organised a broad range of significant academic and public gatherings designed to advance the understanding of Africa as constantly in the making and always in flux. The 15 major conferences and more than 600 events held at the University of Bayreuth and the four ACCs were instrumental in producing new insights, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, promoting innovative research and building collaborative networks among scholars, practitioners, as well as the broader public.

The conferences and symposia convened by the Cluster at its various locations brought together experts from many fields to present cutting-edge research and engage in debates about critical issues in African studies. Especially notable among these are the international Annual Cluster Conferences: *Africa Multiple: Conversations and Building Networks* in 2019, *Africa\*n Relations: Modalities Reflected* in 2021, *Medialities* in 2022, and *Spatialities* in 2023, featuring keynote speakers from diverse scholarly and professional backgrounds and contributing to multifaceted explorations of African and African-diasporic life-worlds. The conference on *Frontiers in African Digital Research* held in 2020 was instrumental in advancing the Cluster’s digital research environment and its agenda in research data management.

Workshops and seminars convened by Cluster members have focused on specific themes such as migration, religious authority, education, gender, and economic development, among many others. These smaller, more specialised events allowed for in-depth discussions and the sharing of preliminary research findings. Several workshops included interactive sessions to encourage collaborative problem-solving and networking among researchers and practitioners. A high-profile event format was the Intersectionality and Critical Diversity Literacy round table and lecture series organised by the Cluster’s Gender and Diversity Office.

In addition to academic events, the Africa Multiple Cluster has been very active in outreach activities. It hosted highly visible lectures to bridge the gap between scholarship and the general public, including the annual Africa Multiple New Year Lecture and the *Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture* at Iwalewahaus. Addressing pressing issues and emerging trends in African societies, these events helped to make complex research accessible to wider audiences. Through partnerships with local organisations and educational institutions the Cluster also engaged in community outreach.

The Africa Multiple Cluster has also supported projects that include exhibitions, art installations, or film presentations. Highlighting the rich cultural heritage and contemporary artistic expressions of Africa, these projects offer a platform for African artists and scholars to showcase their work. Exhi-



The Cluster’s leadership, principal investigators and coordinators in 2022.

bitions organised by the Cluster have included visual arts, film, and performance, reflecting the vibrant cultural landscape of Africa and its diasporas.

#### Online Platforms and Publications

The Africa Multiple Cluster has leveraged digital platforms to extend its reach and impact. It maintains an active online presence through its website and social media channels, where it shares research findings, event updates, and relevant news.

The Cluster also maintains a range of publication outlets, such as the Africa Multiple book series with Brill Academic Publishers that includes an open access option, three series of working papers and the University of Bayreuth

Africa Studies Online series (BASO), which all contribute to the global academic discourse on African Studies. The numerous partnerships and transcontinental collaborations fostered by the Cluster between researchers from different institutions and regions have led to co-authored publications, enhancing the quality and expanding the scope of African Studies.

#### First funding period ends in 2025

At the end of 2025, the first funding period of the Excellence Strategy will be coming to an end, with the option of a second funding cycle for the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. By then, within just a few years of existence, the Cluster will have made significant and lasting contributions to the reconfig-

uration of African Studies. Through its interdisciplinary research, global partnerships, and commitment to new forms of knowledge production, the Cluster will have set new standards in the study of African and African diasporic life-worlds. Its work has not only enriched scholarship but will also have a lasting impact on the broader understanding of Africa's place in the world. As the Cluster hopefully moves forward to a second phase of funding, it aims to build on these achievements, thus further consolidating and expanding its transformative agenda in African Studies. All this within the premises of the FZA, the newly constructed state-of-the-art-building that will bundle all African Studies activities on UBT's Campus.

## Figures at a Glance: Five Years Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence

The Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence consists of **5** African Cluster Centres in Bayreuth, Ouagadougou, Lagos, Makhanda, and Eldoret.

The Cluster has welcomed **166** members.

**118** management board meetings have been conducted by the Cluster.

**72** interdisciplinary and international short and long-term research projects have been launched.

The Cluster has established **4** Junior Research Groups and **8** Postdoc Working Groups.

The Cluster's international network spans **6** continents (Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas).

Between 2019 and 2023, **76** new doctoral students were admitted and **56** completed their doctorates.

**25** Principal Investigators work within the **6** research sections of the Cluster of Excellence: Affiliations, Arts and Aesthetics, Knowledges, Learning, Mobility, and Moralities.

The Cluster hosted more than **1.100** guests and **87** fellows.

# A New Home for African Studies in Bayreuth

The facade mirrors the colours of the logo of the IAS.

Text **MATTHIAS CHRISTEN**  
**CYRUS SAMIMI, EVA SPIES**

**The construction of the Research Centre for Africa (Forschungszentrum Afrika, FZA), the new home of African Studies, is on schedule and will most likely be finished by early 2025.**

The new Research Centre for Africa (FZA) building is funded by a joint initiative of the Federal Government of Germany and the Bavarian State Government. Construction of the new building on the University of Bayreuth campus started at the end of 2022 and progressed much faster than scheduled. The Bavarian Minister of Sciences and the Arts, Markus Blume, laid the foundation stone on 24 March 2023. The topping out ceremony took place on 7 August 2023. The pace of the construction process is impressive, and a new appearance emerges nearly every day.

A lot is also happening inside the building: MediaLab as a central element of the FZA is on its way, after the German Research Foundation (DFG) approved the funding for the

equipment. If everything continues as scheduled, the Institute of African Studies (IAS) will move into the new building in early 2025.

Over four floors the building offers a home for all scholars working on the Centre's research agenda, summarised as Society, Technology, and Ecology in Africa – Challenges of the 21st Century. There is room as well for the Junior Fellows of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), for early career scholars working on Africa-related research topics, and guests of the IAS.

The building will also be the home for the IAS staff, including the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), European Interdisciplinary Master African Studies (EIMAS), and the certificate programme AfriZert. In total, more than a hundred people will find a workspace here, some in conventional offices, but the majority in Open Creative Labs (OCLs). These are open spaces that can be flexibly adapted to the needs of its users, allowing different modes of working and facilitating

communication across disciplines and status groups. The building also offers state of the art meeting and conference facilities that enhance inclusive forms of cooperation and exchange in Bayreuth and with the world. In this sense, the Research Centre can also be understood as a structural contribution to the broader project to "reconfigure African Studies". The MediaLab will contribute to this aim by linking Media Studies with African Studies and fostering the digital strategy of the IAS, including research data management as well as the digitalisation of parts of the Iwalewaha collection. Iwalewaha itself remains at its prominent location in the city centre, but will have exhibition facilities in the new building. In this way, Iwalewaha will be more present on campus and extend its space for people to meet and engage with contemporary African art in its global context.

The opening ceremony is planned for May 2025, the Institute of African Studies is confident that the process will be on schedule and able to welcome its affiliates in the Research Centre to make FZA another milestone of African Studies in Bayreuth.



The leadership of the Institute of African Studies and the Cluster of Excellence with Minister Markus Blume and BIGSAS doctorate Ange Dorine Irakoze



The construction site of the FZA



Photo: Andi Weiland

# The University of Bayreuth: A hub for African Studies

Text JOËL GLASMAN, STEFAN OUMA, GABRIELE SOMMER

**Few universities in Europe offer knowledge about Africa. The University of Bayreuth has become one of the largest hubs for African Studies worldwide.**

In a perfect world, universities would study all the world's societies equally. But we do not live in a perfect world. For too long, academia has regarded Europe as the only continent worth studying. The disciplines have long refused to study non-European societies seriously.

Today, there are about 5,000 higher education institutions in Europe. Only few

of them offer high-quality scholarship on African societies. Although Africa is home to one-fifth of the world's population, only a few German universities have dedicated centres for African Studies: Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Mainz.

The University of Bayreuth (UBT) already had a specialisation in African Studies when it was founded in 1975. In the beginning, there were only a handful of scholars. Gradually, UBT managed to secure third-party funding, admit students, and produce cutting-edge research. Establishing the Institute of African Studies in 1990, UBT is now home to the largest centre for African Studies in Europe.

An earlier milestone, in 1981, was the establishment of Iwalewahaus, a unique, research-oriented creative workspace dedicated to contemporary fine and popular arts from Africa, the African diaspora, Asia and the Pacific region. It is nowadays home to the largest collection of contemporary African art in Europe. The Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) was founded in 2007. It currently hosts almost 90 doctoral students, more than half of them from the African continent. The disciplines that are part of IAS offer 15 undergraduate and postgraduate courses with a strong focus on African Studies, and the university library holds of over 200,000 books on Africa, which, in the German

context, is only surpassed by the University of Frankfurt's Specialised Information Service (FID) for African Studies. The most prominent research program under the umbrella of the IAS is the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, which was established in 2019 as part of the Excellence Strategy of the German Federal and State Government. Integrated into the Cluster is the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, which started in 2012 as a BMBF-funded collaborative research project *Future Africa – Visions in Time*. The Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL), set up in 2008 with the University of Dar es Salaam, is one of the most successful cooperation projects with East Africa. The Digital Research Environment (DRE) of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence maintains large data repositories and offers solutions for the vast research data collected by the Cluster's researchers. The Africa Research Centre, a new building for African Studies, will open in 2025 and provide the new home for our scholars and cutting-edge research facilities. Moreover, the Peace

and Conflict Research Network (PCRN) facilitates research on war and decolonial approaches.

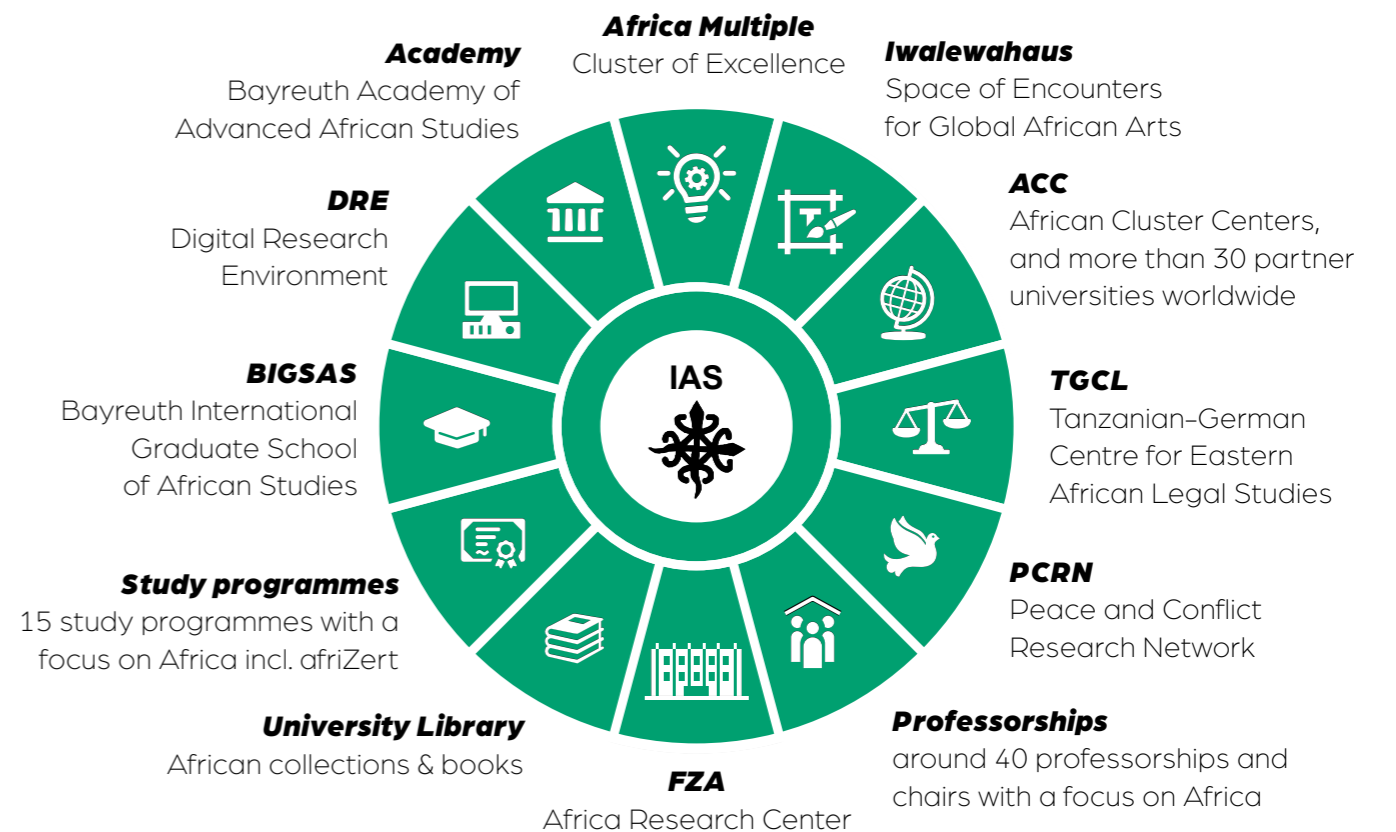
At the University of Bayreuth, there are around 40 professorships dedicated to African Studies. Each professorship has its own research projects, such as Philosophy and Genre: Creating a Textual Basis for African Philosophy, at the Chair of African and Afrophone Philosophies, which is funded by the European Research Council. Our work transcends a narrow territorial view of Africa and addresses concerns of the diverse African diasporas, including the one in Germany. Tackling such doorstep issues is becoming increasingly important for the IAS.

The achievements of the IAS are based on our collaboration with a large number of international partners. Since the establishment of the Africa Multiple Cluster, we have worked closely with the four African Cluster Centres, located at Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya; Rhodes University in Makhanda, South Africa; Joseph

Ki-Zerbo University in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and the University of Lagos, Nigeria. The IAS also maintains collaborations with 27 further partner universities in Africa, for instance in Sousse, Tunisia; Bamako, Mali; Dakar, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; and Cotonou, Benin, to mention but a few. The IAS further cooperates with universities and research institutions in Bordeaux, France; Bloomington, Indiana, USA; Salvador da Bahia, Brazil; Seoul, South Korea; New Delhi, India; Kyoto, Japan; San José, Costa Rica and Santiago de Cuba, Cuba.

None of the IAS' work would have been possible without the ongoing support from the university leadership in Bayreuth, the city of Bayreuth, the Bavarian State Ministry for Sciences and the Arts, as well as the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Over the last fifty years, we have enjoyed the support of many third-party funding agencies, governmental as well as non-governmental organisations, and received prominent visitors from all over the world. 🌍

## The Institute of African Studies



Graphic: Michael Wegener

BRIAS members and invited speakers Melanie Habelitz-Wollgam, Martin Schüssler, Melanie Schulte, Sabrina Maurus and Charlotte Griese at the Campus of HSWT in Weihenstephan



Text EBERHARD ROTHFUSS

**Founded in 2014, BRIAS seeks to strengthen academic expertise on Africa in Bavaria and to carry out joint interdisciplinary research projects with other academic institutions in order to generate synergy effects.**

The Bavarian Research Institute of African Studies (BRIAS) was founded in 2014 as a cooperation network by the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Bayreuth, the Institute for New Energy Systems (InES) at Ingolstadt University of Applied Sciences, the Africa Institute at Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences, and the Forum Africa Center at Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg. Weihenstephan

Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences (HSWT) has also been part of BRIAS since 2023.

The aim of BRIAS is to pool scientific expertise on Africa in Bavaria and to carry out joint interdisciplinary research projects in order to combine the strengths of the different academic institutions. At the core of the joint research are the Research Fields Mobility – Energy – Resources – Agriculture and Food – Health. In addition to the focus on collaborative research, BRIAS is proactive as a network in the Transversal Fields Cooperation/Network – Teaching – Policy Advice – Transfer.

After years of successful joint research projects (e.g., PROCEED/SEED/

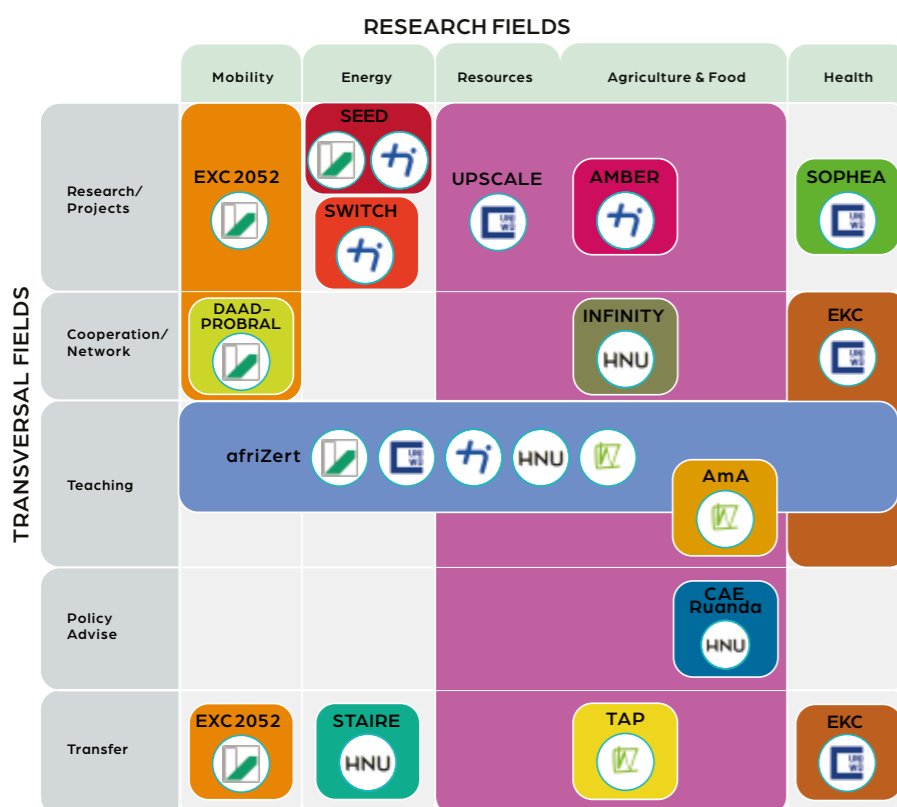
STAIRE), the Bavarian network is increasingly seeking to provide scientific advice to civil society actors and political decision-makers.

On 2 to 3 May, 2024, BRIAS cooperation partners came together at HSWT to celebrate their annual meeting, which was hosted by Eberhard Rothfuß, Chairman of BRIAS, and Carsten Lorz of HSWT. Over the two days, all project partners were informed about current topics and projects at the partner universities. Representatives of various Bavarian ministries and the Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR), represented by Melanie Schulte and Sabrina Maurus, were also invited to provide information on the project work and the collaborative research of the BRIAS partners.

Melanie Habelitz-Wollgam, Head of International Relations, Development Cooperation, Africa and the Middle East at the Bavarian State Chancellery, was a guest from Munich along with Martin Schüssler from the Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism, and Charlotte Griese from the Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy.

**BRIAS PARTNERS**

- University of Bayreuth (lead)
- University of Würzburg
- THI Ingolstadt
- Hochschule Neu-Ulm
- HSWT Weihenstephan and Triesdorf



# High Profile Visit from the World of Politics

Text SABINE GREINER

**Federal Minister Svenja Schulze and a delegation of politicians spent an afternoon at Iwalewahaus getting to know the Cluster's agenda and its affiliations.**

On 24 August 2023, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Svenja Schulze, was a guest at the University of Bayreuth. Together with Member of the German Bundestag Anette Kramme and local politicians Halil Tasdelen and Tobias Schmidmeier the Minister learned about the profile field of African Studies and the Africa Multiple Cluster of

Excellence at the University of Bayreuth (UBT).

The delegation was greeted by UBT's Vice President of Internationalisation, Equal Opportunities, and Diversity and Chair of Criminal Law III Nina Nestler, who presented the university's facts and figures to the visitors, before Rüdiger Seesemann, Spokesperson of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, presented the Cluster's innovative, interdisciplinary, and international agenda to reconfigure African Studies and its significance to the University's research portfolio. Seesemann explained the Cluster's overarching goal of establishing new African



Sigrid Horsch-Albert (right) led Minister Schulze (left) and her delegation through Iwalewahaus.

Photos: Robert Götze/Fabrica Lux

Svenja Schulze and her delegation of local politicians was welcomed at the historic building that hosts Iwalewahaus.





Minister Svenja Schulze

perspectives in research and science communication in the field of African Studies. The presentations were rounded off by Monika Rohmer and Thierry Boudjekeu, both doctoral students at the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), who informed the visitors about the doctoral program in general and their personal experience at UBT in particular. In the subsequent discussion, Schulze was noticeably impressed by the personal stories of the doctoral students and underscored the relevance of the interdisciplinary orientation shown by UBT

and the Cluster of Excellence. Before signing UBT's golden book, the Minister and her delegation took a guided tour of Iwalewahaus with Managing Director Sigrid Horsch-Albert and seemed intrigued by the outstanding collection and its running exhibition.

The Minister's visit in Bayreuth underscored the important and innovative impulses emerging from the research and international cooperation that the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence has facilitated since its founding in 2019.

## South African Consul General at Iwalewahaus

Text and Photo: SABINE GREINER

Another delegation from the world of politics visited Iwalewahaus on 16 August 2023. The Consul General of the Republic of South Africa Roleta Lebelo, the Consul Political Marida van der Westhuizen-Nel and the Vice Consul Political Daniel Pretorius joined leaders and scholars from the University of Bayreuth (UBT) and the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. Together with the President of the University Stefan Leible, the Cluster's Vice Dean of Research and Chair of Epistemologies of the Global South Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the Cluster's managing director Franz Kogelmann, the coordinator for Internationalisation and public engagement Doris Löhr and the data curator Anke Schürer-Ries the delegation found out about current research projects and discussed the status quo of African Studies at UBT and challenges in trying to increase the number of African students at the institution.



Consul General Roleta Lebelo with President Leible

## News: Chair of African Legal Studies

The Somali delegation met with leaders and scholars from the University of Bayreuth.

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER

**In 2023, the following projects were continued and implemented at the Chair of African Legal Studies at the University of Bayreuth.**

### Cooperation with SIMAD University

As already reported in last year's NAB, Thoko Kaime, the Chair of African Legal Studies, has worked on establishing a strong connection between the University of Bayreuth and various actors in government and the academy in the Federal Republic of

Somalia since June 2022. SIMAD law students have been participating in online courses since the winter semester 2022/2023 and the Chair has developed a Law in Africa Program based at the University of Bayreuth which can be completed by SIMAD law students. In addition, the Chair successfully launched the Asli Ahmed Award on the African Legal Studies blog (<https://africanlegalstudies.blog/>), which recognises outstanding articles by Somali scholars on legal developments in the Federal Republic of Somalia. In June 2023, the Chair

was honoured to welcome a Somali delegation from SIMAD University at the University of Bayreuth. During the visit, further developments of the joint expansion of teaching and research were discussed. Another item at the top of the agenda was the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Somalia and the Chair of African Legal Studies in September 2022 to support the review of Somalia's current provisional constitution in an advisory capacity by providing constitutional expertise.

### Chair Activities

Drawing on the Chair's comprehensive expertise, a report was submitted in May 2023 to the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report focusing on Malawi's colonial-era laws criminalising same-sex sexual conduct was based on findings of our research project about intractable problems of Human Rights (see above). The report thus demonstrates the current contradiction between human rights legislation and reality. Another report was submitted to the Independent Expert on Somalia at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report evaluated the human rights situation in Somalia throughout the year of 2022 and highlighted the positive strides made in terms of political stability and security within the country. Furthermore, the report provided updates on the ongoing constitutional review.

### Teaching and Academic Work

In addition to the regular lectures, Kaime facilitated various guest lectures and panel discussions by visiting professors and scholars such as Hope M. Ndhlovu Chanda, Collins C. Ajibo, Bonolo Dinokopila, Anthony C. Diala, and Walters Nsoh, reflecting the academic diversity at the Chair. Furthermore, Gift Mauluka, research assistant at the Chair, represented the Chair at the program *Comparative African Politics: Africa is Not a Coun-*



Nina Nestler, Vice President Internationalisation at the University of Bayreuth, and Thoko Kaime exchanged thoughts and ideas with the Somali guests.

try, which focused on the differences rather than similarities of politics and policy making across Africa. The African Legal Studies blog saw various published articles on human rights, environmental law, and more, and initiated a collaboration with the *Verfassungsblog: On Matters Constitutional*. The Additional Study Program "International Legal Studies", which debuted in the summer semester 2022, was further developed and more and more students are able to expand their knowledge and understanding of various areas of international law.

### Kaime as Delegate on the German Chancellor's Trip to Africa

Kaime was part of the cultural delegation on Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz's trip to Nigeria and Ghana. During this visit, Kaime had the opportunity to present the work of German universities and the University of Bayreuth in particular, which con-

nects Germany and Africa on the path to a common future. A particular topic of discussion was the question of how joint cooperation between Germany and the African countries can take place on an equal footing.



Thoko Kaime was invited to accompany German chancellor Olaf Scholz on his trip to Nigeria and Ghana.



# A Busy Year at



Text CLAUDIA GEBAUER

**Earlier editions of the NAB continuously updated readers about the status of the supplementary study program afriZert. This tradition continues with a fresh insight into afriZert activities in 2023.**

## Cooperation and Outreach

Early in 2023, Claudia Gebauer was invited by Ministerial Councillor Melanie Habelitz-Wollgam to present the afriZert program at the Bavarian State Chancellery in Munich to invited representatives of all Bavarian ministries. The presentation was well received, and some participants jokingly considered going back to university to join afriZert. The trip to Munich provided an excellent opportunity for cooperation meetings with the Bavarian Youth Exchange Foundation (SJB), which funds the afriZert stipend program, the Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR) Africa desk, and the Technical University Munich (TUM) Global and Alumni Office. The latter resulted in a cooperation agreement for afriZert between the University of Bayreuth and TUM, as well as a presentation of afriZert during TUM Global Week.



When the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) took place in Cologne in May 2023, afriZert was also there to catch up and connect with scholars from all over the world. As a result, the program was able to welcome some colleagues from other universities and institutions as contributors to the afriZert program.



The ECAS conference in Cologne provided new partnerships and networking opportunities for afriZert. Photo: Claudia Gebauer

Throughout 2023, afriZert was busy with advertising, communicating with other universities and colleges of applied sciences, and interviewing potential afriZert students. In the wake of these efforts, good use was made of afriZert's Instagram account; please feel free to have a look occasionally to keep up to date with afriZert between NAB issues!

## Student Numbers and Scholarships

In 2023, 22 afriZert students continued their studies successfully and eleven of them completed their stay abroad. The average duration of a stay abroad currently is 3.27 months and afriZert students have completed internships or semesters abroad at (among others) the Somali Institute of

Health Research (SIHR) in Hargeisa, Republic of Somaliland; at the Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu, Nigeria; and at the regional office of the Goethe Institute in Kigali, Rwanda.

In the winter term 2023/24, afriZert was joined by another 25 students. Of these, the majority (14) are currently aiming for a bachelor's degree. Among the students' home institutions, the University of Bayreuth (ten students) and TUM (seven students) are particularly well represented.

## Teaching

While our student numbers increased, so did the number of courses that constitute afriZert. For the summer term 2023, three courses were designed and implemented for the first time:

The M2 Africa In and With the World seminar was designed and joined by



Our afriZert students are eager to expand their understanding and knowledge of different African countries and societies. Photo: afriZert

six very committed lecturers: Cyrus Samimi, David Stadelmann, Alexander Stroh-Steckelberg, Katharina Fink, Gilbert Ndi Shang (all University of Bayreuth), and Bonolo Ramadi Dinokopila (University of Botswana). In the seminar, students were, for the first time in the program, asked to "switch"

roles and provide asynchronous presentations themselves instead of simply acting as recipients of information. Overall, the students did a good job and not only included self-recorded videos, but also created interactive elements and exercises. The debriefing of the presentations then took place in online meetings, so that exchange, answering open questions, and giving feedback were possible.

The M3.2 seminar of the Language and Communication module was held under the expert guidance of Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn and considered the "invention" and use of African languages in detail, their colonial legacies, as well as their contemporary use. Online meetings allowed for regular exchange between the participants and lecturer and in this seminar, too, students contributed asynchronous presentations.

The face-to-face seminar Preparation for the Stay Abroad for the module M4 was conducted for the first time in May 2023. It included input from the University of Bayreuth's company doctor on medical topics, more detailed information on the afriZert scholarship program provided by the



In our M4 workshop, we prepare our students for their stay abroad. Photo: afriZert

SJB, as well as small group discussions, poster presentations, and some intercultural training exercises.

For the winter term 2023/24, three courses were newly designed and implemented for the first time: The asynchronous language course Swahili for afriZert was drafted and realised by expert Rosanna Tramutoli. Online sessions providing time for discus-

sion, live exercises, clarification, and questions were conducted under the guidance of Shani Khalfan and Maureen Karanja.

We were very fortunate to secure the input and support of a whole series of highly regarded contributors for the lecture series of module M5. Among the contributors were Paul Starkey (Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the University of Reading), Chigozie Nweke-Eze (Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Integrated Africa Power, IAP), Daniel Hartmann (Managing Director and Senior Physician, Clinic and Polyclinic for Surgery, Klinikum



Chigozie Nweke-Eze (left), Co-founder and Managing Partner of Integrated Africa Power, IAP, personally came to Bayreuth to record his contribution for afriZert in the ZHL studio. Photo: afriZert

thus were able to work on subject-specific contributions. After having prepared asynchronous presentations for possibly the first time in summer 2023, they were now tasked with designing entire course units that could be presented and made available to all other seminar participants in the "retrieval phase" for viewing and review. Again, our afriZert students proved to be very creative and devoted to the endeavour by building comprehensive units including self-recorded videos, self-produced podcast contributions, as well as selected material from other sources and self-created exercises.

Of course, the winter term also saw us repeat some courses for the new students of the second cohort that were all revised according to the feedback from the previous teaching cycle.

As you can tell, we have been quite busy, but also very happy with the results of our hard work and enduring efforts. None of this would be possible, however, if we did not have strong support from a variety of institutions and individuals. Therefore, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts for the overall funding of afriZert and to the SJB that provides us with funds for the afriZert stipend program. Of course, the continued support of the IAS speakers and steering committee, as well as that of the staff at the University of Bayreuth must not go unmentioned. So, we would like to thank all of you for your confidence in our work and the afriZert undertaking, and hope that we are able to continue this journey together in 2024 and thereafter.

afriZert was presented at the TUM Global Week 2023 to advertise the program. Photo: afriZert



# Exploring Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict

Members of the peace and conflict research network at the University of Bayreuth at its foundation in Spring 2022. Photo: Niklas Reinhart

Text and photo **DARJA WOLFMEIER**

**Through joint research, events and collaborations the Peace and Conflict Studies Network at the University of Bayreuth (UBT) aims to further interdisciplinary discussion and increase the role and impact of Peace and Conflict Research in politics and society.**

The exploration of postcolonial hierarchies in peace and conflict has emerged as a crucial endeavor in contemporary academia. Over the past two years, UBT has intensified research in this area, notably through two networks funded by the Federal Ministry of Higher Education: Conflicts, Meanings, Transitions, and the Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict network. The latter involves researchers at the Chairs of African Sociology, African History, and Epistemologies of the Global South and is a Germany-wide consortium that has partners at the University of Erfurt, the Philipps University of Marburg, and the Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg, and partners with the Cluster of Excellence at UBT.

For instance, Adam Sandor's sociological research in West Africa scrutinises transnational security initiatives, revealing how South-South co-operations are influenced by power hier-

archies, questioning the design, materialities, and practices of these on a micro-level. Patricia Pinky Ndlovu's sociological and decolonial feminist work on the South African minibus industry exposes the intersectionality of violence and gender discrimination in the workplace, highlighting the challenges faced by women navigating male-dominated environments. Darja Wolfmeier's analysis of humanitarian aid organisations exposes hierarchical practices of discrimination, urging a re-evaluation of relief efforts within historical contexts.

The Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict network serves as a hub for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration, facilitating dialogue on three key thematic areas: justice, conflict, and security governance in a variety of foci (environmental issues, transitional justice questions, conflict resolution, and international institutions) in different areas of the world (Africa, South and Latin America, Europe, and Asia).

Events like workshops and public talks engage both scholars and the public. In a recent conversation, Sandor and University of Gothenburg scholar Swati Parashar engaged in a vivid conversation on the crucial insights that postcolonial studies can have for peace and conflict research.

The question guiding the evening was hence pointing to the invisibility of violence (such as hunger) and survivors of violence.

Consequently, the members of the network engage with scholars not only experts in the fields of peace and conflict studies, but specifically in postcolonial and decolonial studies that challenge them to question their own research practices and intersections with hierarchies in the research process itself. The network's commitment to critical engagement with postcolonial and decolonial studies is evident in initiatives like the Virtual Encyclopedia, facilitating inclusive knowledge production, creating a reservoir of concepts and questions by and for practitioners, academics, and activists on peace and conflict related topics alike.

The Peace and Conflict Network at UBT:



Virtual Encyclopedia "Rewriting Peace and Conflict" of the BMBF-funded research network Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict:



# New Year Lecture

Text **SABINE GREINER**

Photos **ROBERT GÖTZE – FABRICA LUTZ**

**It has become a beloved tradition: Every year in January, the New Year Lecture heralds the activities of the Cluster of Excellence for the year that has just begun. In 2023, it was Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni's lecture that would set the pace for the coming months.**

On 12 January 2023 a considerable crowd consisting of members of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence and interested scholars came together on campus of the University of Bayreuth to listen to the fourth annual New Year Lecture of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. Before the keynote speaker, holder of the Chair of Epistemologies of the Global South and Vice Dean of Research in the Cluster, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, presented his thoughts on "Ten Challenges of Reconfiguring African Studies", Nina Nestler, the Vice President of Internationalisation, Equal Opportunities and Diversity of the University of Bayreuth, welcomed the community online and present. In her welcome address she emphasised the importance of decolonisation and the recognition of Africa as a legitimate place of knowledge production for the task of reconfiguring African Studies. After Christine Vogt William, Director of Gender and Diversity Office in the Cluster of Excellence, introduced Ndlovu-Gatsheni by sketching his academic biography and achievements, the distinguished scholar took the stage.

In his thought-provoking lecture, Ndlovu-Gatsheni mapped out the domains where intervention was possible, needed, and indeed required, albeit not always easy to undertake in advancing the agenda of reconfiguring African Studies. The leading decolonial scholar began his remarks by reflecting on the very nature of African Studies and explored what it means to reconfigure African Studies. He explained that the colonial baggage and the role of the co-



f.l.t.r.: Anke Schürer-Ries (moderator of the evening), Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Christine Vogt-William and Rüdiger Seesemann

lonial library continue to complicate and haunt this relatively young field, while the complex questions of epistemology, methodology, and theory in turn keep raising animated debate. Ndlovu-Gatsheni also stressed that decolonisation necessarily lies at the core of any agenda of "Reconfiguring African Studies", including the Cluster's.

The focus of his lecture were the ten challenges that arise when undertaking the task of reconfiguring African Studies. He explained that the first hurdle lies in the genealogies and genesis of African Studies stressing that epistemic issues raised the most challenging questions. Ndlovu-Gatsheni continued that African Studies needed to be approached through the context of decolonisation and encouraged scholars to start thinking from the spaces where colonialism did not achieve its objective. In his opinion,

another challenge was the question of theory and empiricism in African Studies specifically the political economy of knowledge, and the scholars' own consciousness and training. He then elaborated on linguistic considerations – the fourth challenge – and explained that language and the use of a mother tongue was more than mere communication: it is rather the bank of memory, carrier of culture, identity, and consciousness. The fifth and sixth challenge, Ndlovu-Gatsheni continued, pertained to establishing a chronology of African history and the attempt to think of Africa and other regions of the Global South in terms of "areas". He described the area studies approach as another hurdle and underscored the need to move beyond thinking of Africa as a "country". Ndlovu-Gatsheni also elaborated on the androcentric question in African Studies and emphasised the importance of considering women scholars in this field. Being an historian himself, the Cluster's Vice Dean of Research then warned of 'disciplinary decadence' when it comes to African Studies and encouraged to move beyond disciplinary thinking. The last challenge, Ndlovu-Gatsheni addressed was the question of the canon and the colonial library in African studies. He quoted Toni Morrison when he stressed: "Canon building is empire building (...) and Canon defence is national defence." 🌍



Scan the qr-code to watch the New Year Lecture 2023 on YouTube



## Spatialities Conference Shows the Wide Range of Cluster Research

Text SABINE GREINER

Photos ROBERT GÖTZE/FABRICA LUX

**In October 2023, the fourth annual conference of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence took place on the campus of the University of Bayreuth. The four-day event focused on the topic of *Spatialities*, showcasing the broad scope of Cluster research.**

From 11 to 14 October 2023, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth hosted a conference on the theme of *Reconfiguring African Studies through Spatialities*. Over 500 participants had registered to follow the three keynotes and 36 panels either online or in person at the FAN B building on the University of Bayreuth campus.

### One Topic – Countless Facets

Although the organising team had limited the call for papers to the topic of “spaces” in the broadest sense, the number of proposals submitted was outstanding. “It was impressive how many submissions we received not

only from Cluster members and associated researchers, but also from colleagues from other international institutions,” explained Doris Löhr, Coordinator of the Cluster portfolio Internationalisation and Public Engagement, who, together with Robert Debusmann, Coordinator of Research, and Eberhard Rothfuß, Chair of Social and Population Geography at the University of Bayreuth, was responsible for organising the academic content of the conference. Not all of the contributions could be considered, but the successful submissions were accommodated in a total of 36 panels, which were presented in parallel in three rooms on each of the four conference days.

“The remarkable diversity of topics presented across papers and panels once again impressively demonstrated the extraordinary range of Africa-related research fertilised by the Cluster,” Rüdiger Seesemann, the dean of the Cluster of Excellence summarised. The individual panels illuminated specific facets of the context of *Spatialities*: participants could find

out more about topics such as *Political, Performative, Religious, Ecological, Digital, Gendered, or Entangled Spaces*, or listen to presentations on topics like *Pan-Africanism, History and Space, or Necropoliticism*, among others, and discuss them with the panellists afterwards.

### Programme Highlights:

The highlights of the four-day conference were undoubtedly the three keynote lectures, which were delivered by heavyweights of academia. Patricia Daley, Professor of Human Geography of Africa at Oxford University, United Kingdom, kicked off the conference on Wednesday evening (11 October). In her opening lecture, *Learning Disobedience in African Studies: Producing Defiant Scholarship on Migration and Refugees*, the renowned scholar pointed out the ongoing decades-long dehumanisation of refugees and migrants and called on all scholars to stand up against existing racist structures of knowledge production in research and teaching. On Thursday evening, 12 October, Tendayi Sithole, Professor of Political Sciences at the University of South Africa, followed up on the keynote from the

previous evening with a look at *Black Radical Thought*, particularly the somatic thought of Mabogo P. More. Sithole addressed the question of what it is like to be “Black in an anti-Black world” and also called for a commitment to freedom, both academically and socially. As part of the dialogue-based keynote, the scholar discussed Black radical thinking and how such a place of freedom could be created with Bruce Janz, Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Florida, USA. The last keynote on Friday afternoon (13 October) was given by Katherine McKittrick, Canada Research Chair in Black Studies at Queens University in Kingston, Canada. In her lecture, *A Black Sense of Place*, the well-known feminist scholar shed light on processes of knowledge production and research practices from the perspective of a Black woman scholar.

### Networking and Exchange

All through the conference the participants could be seen in lively exchange with each other. During the breaks, they discussed what they had heard or exchanged contact details for further collaboration. On Friday evening, during the performance of the band Gaya Verse at Iwalewahaus, which swept the audience away with reggae music led by Tanya A. Garnett, singer and Director of the University of Liberia’s Ibrahim B. Babangida School for International Studies the informal networking of the international visitors continued.

As participants said their goodbyes on Saturday afternoon, they were enthusiastic about the diverse programme and good organisation of the fourth Cluster conference. The Co-spokesperson of the Cluster of Excellence, Ute Fendler, also drew a positive conclusion: “We are very pleased that the Cluster of Excellence’s conference on *Spatialities* has not only theoretically but also literally created a unique ‘space’ for fruitful debates and intellectual exchange around our overarching topic *Reconfiguring African Studies*. The event itself, but also the positive feedback and immense interest of the participants in our work, greatly inspires us for the two years remaining of the Cluster’s first funding period.”



Patricia Daley held the first keynote of the conference.



After Tendayi Sithole (left) gave his keynote he went into dialogue with Bruno Janz (middle) and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatshehi (right).



The international Cluster conference was a space for networking and engagement.



Epifania Amoo-Adare during her book conversation with Christine Vogt-William.



An advertisement for a human zoo in Bayreuth. Just one of many historical artefacts discovered by Florian Unterburger.



Snapshots of the speakers and moderator at the Bayreuther Stadtgespräche in July 2023.



## Bayreuth City Talks:

# Colonial Fantasies and Facades in Bayreuth

Text CASSANDRA MARK-THIESEN

**On 5 July 2023, the Institute of African Studies (IAS) organised an edition of the University of Bayreuth's City Talks on the topic of Colonial Bayreuth – why it still affects us today.**

In July 2023, the Margrave's Fountain, typically a centrepiece of Bayreuth's tourist program, featured as the heirloom of a different story of human mobility and commerce still carried out (differently) by members of the local community. On 5 July 2023, the Institute of African Studies (IAS), then under the leadership of Eva Spies and Thoko Kaime, and with Jane Ayeko-Kümmeth as Academic Coordinator, organised the latest edition of the University of Bayreuth's City Talks on the topic of *Colonial Bayreuth – why it still affects us today*. Hosted at Iwalewahauss, the event, organised as part of the new IAS outreach drive, drew a large crowd comprising of students, faculty, and members of the local community, including Bayreuth's Mayor, Thomas Ebersberger. The question of Bayreuth's colonial and global history and its lasting impact on contemporary culture is not discussed enough outside the confines of university halls. And the evening's two speakers managed to provide compelling analyses of the history and legacy of this past. Cassandra Mark-Thiesen moderated the event.

First, the crowd heard from Florian André Unterburger of the Friends of the Museum of Industry Bayreuth (IMB). Unterburger narrated in great detail an industrial history of Bayreuth centring around colonial goods imported from German and other European colonies: sugar from the Caribbean, coffee from Brazil and the Ottoman Empire, and cocoa from Ghana, to name a few examples. A number of commodities produced in or around Bayreuth were also exported to feed this trade: from textiles to glass beads created in the nearby Fichtel Mountains. African labour was one of the linchpins of this global trade. As Unterburger informed the crowd (a point the second speaker would underline with the help of a digital visualisation), between the period of 1510 and 1888, around twelve million Africans were enslaved and forcibly moved to the "New World" to facilitate a value chain from which cities like Bayreuth would generate significant wealth. In-depth discussions on these and related issues are regularly taken up during walking tours provided by the IMB around Bayreuth and surrounding areas.

Some enslaved Africans also arrived on German shores. To highlight this point, after the first part of the deliberations, a short audio clip from the book by Wulf D. Hund, *How the Germans became White: A Brief (Home Town) History of Racism (Wie die Deutschen Weiß wurden: Kleine (Heimat)Geschichte des Rassismus)*, was presented, with an

emphasis on the location of Bayreuth. The clip was vocalised by the politician and voice actor Anne Helm. Afterwards, Stefan Ouma, Professor of Economic Geography at the University of Bayreuth, explored Bayreuth's physical and cultural landscape for traces of this past. His talk was an introduction to the astonishingly long history of Black presence in the city, driven by the transatlantic slave trade. In addition, Ouma illuminated the colonial ideology, imagery, and language that Black people have had to endure ever since. Using Bayreuth as a case study, he showed how these oppressive elements have been carefully maintained over time or, if not, re-invented in order for a system of white supremacy to remain intact.

The *City Talks* bring together members of the university and members of the public to strengthen the relationship between the two groups. A central aim of this particular event was to foster an open and democratic space that could strengthen inclusivity and accountability. While the speakers had to deal with a certain degree of defensiveness and derailing, the vast majority of the audience was receptive to the important issues being discussed and the need for more awareness around them. The city can only benefit from more such discussions on difficult but essential issues as university and town work together to shape a better future for Bayreuth.

# Knowledge Lab 2023

Text ROBERT DEBUSMANN

**The Knowledge Lab is the Cluster's most important forum for research and debate. The formats vary from classic academic lectures and seminars to interactive performances and other artistic production, along with joint writing and reading sessions, method studios, and clashing theory seminars.**



The Knowledge Lab programme began in 2023 with the same momentum as it ended the year before. A series of excellent events explored the annual theme of 'Spatialities': guest lectures organised by the annual theme fellow, including contributions from ACC Lagos in the field of social and political sciences, and from ACC Rhodes in the fields of anthropology, musicology, and literature. Workshops were organised by Bayreuth Academy Fellows. The lecture held by Wangui Kimari on the Nairobi 'Outlaws', and the workshop on *Making, Contesting, and Navigating Space* with keynote guest speaker Jacob K. Olupona deserve special mention. All these contributions to the annual theme were an excellent preparation for the annual conference *Reconfiguring African Studies through Spatialities*, which took place from 11 to 14 October. Discussion threads launched in the summer sessions were taken up here and programmed together with the

contributions offered by nearly one hundred selected speakers.

The *Africa in Theory* seminar series Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni organised together with the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS) at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa and Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) fea-

Mugo, who has since passed away, Nirmal Puwar, Farish A. Noor (author of *Framing the Other*), and Shobana Shankar (author of *An Uneasy Embrace*) took part in roundtable discussions on their books and activities. The participants in the room and on Zoom followed the debates with interest and gave passionate feedback, often with a vibrant personal note.



The writer, activist and instructor Micere Githae Mugo was a guest at the Cluster's Knowledge Lab a few months before her passing in 2023.

turing high-calibre guest speakers, retained its great appeal. Leading African scholars inspired the audience with their fresh take on highly discussed topics: Achille Mbembe spoke on the earthly community, Robtel Neajai Pailey discussed dual citizenship, Zubairu Wai shared a critical review of the colonial library, Finex Ndhlovu reflected on the position of African languages, Cheikh A. Thiam presented a study on Négritude. At the beginning of the year, Ndlovu-Gatsheni contributed the New Year's Lecture 2023, outlining the decolonial programme for African Studies that inspires the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence as a whole.

The list of Knowledge Lab guests brought in by the Gender and Diversity Office was again impressive: Wunpini Fatimata Mohammed and Msia Kibona Clark (co-authors of *African Women in Digital Spaces*), Micere Githae

Some International Fellows had the opportunity to give insights in their research: Elizabeth Cooper presented her book about school arson in Kenya, while Stephen Brown spoke about LGBTQ+ rights in individual African countries. Future Artist Fellow Sabelo Mcinziba animated a fascinating panel on *The Inheritance of Loss and Uncertain Futures of History*.

As in previous years, two slots per semester were reserved for the BIGSAS colloquia. These well-organised and compactly held meetings, in which the Junior Fellows demonstrate their expertise and professionalism, would clearly have deserved wider participation from Cluster members. More generally, although the events flagged as keynote events found their audience in 2023, the interest in centrally organised sessions continued to decline among Cluster members. This gives reason to further cool down the Cluster event programme in the future.

# afriKaleidoskop meets arte

Text SABINE GREINER  
Photos ROBERT GÖTZE/FABRICA LUX

**In 2023, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence began an ongoing partnership with the Franco-German cultural public TV network ARTE to showcase documentaries with African or African Diasporic context. The subsequent discussions are recorded and later available in the ARTE events media library.**

The well-established film programme *AfriKaleidoskop* entered a new phase in

2023. In a newly established cooperation with ARTE, the European culture channel, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence presented a series of films that focus on important topics from the African continent. Organised by Doris Löhr, coordinator of the Cluster's portfolio Internationalisation and Public Engagement, the premiere took place on 10 May 2023 with *Looted Art in Benin City (Raubkunst in Benin City)*, which was a part of the series *Africa's New Museums* produced by ARTE. The film is dedicated to the famous and equally controversial Benin Bronzes, the most important art treasure of the Edo, which were looted

in a discussion with the audience, including scholars from the University of Bayreuth, on the topic of the restitution of art objects. The discussion was moderated by Ute Fendler, Chair of Romance Literary Studies and Comparative Literature with a special focus on Africa, and Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, historian and Junior Research Group Leader in the Cluster of Excellence.

On 14 June *AfriKaleidoskop* showed *Yes We Can – die neue Schwarze Malerei*, a documentary by Marion Schmidt exploring the question of whether the official portraits of Barack and Michelle Obama, which were painted by African American artists and generated a great response, were the beginning of a new era or merely the trigger of a short-lived hype. The portraits ensured that the focus is currently on a new generation of African American artists whose works are being noticed in the marketplace. The "Obama effect", however, was not limited to the United States. Throughout the western world, attention to the diverse and powerful, predominantly figurative paintings of Black artists has increased significantly.

Following the exclusive premiere screening of the documentary, scholars from the University of Bayreuth discussed the topic, the film, and the motivation behind the project with filmmaker Schmidt. The discussion focused, among other things, on the questions that the film pursues: Is the art of the African Diaspora perceived differently today than it was a few years ago? Is the Obama effect also evident in Africa or Germany, and what developments are there in terms of the reception and appreciation of Black art? The discussion was led by Fendler and Dandara Maia Schellenberg, doctoral student at BIGSAS, who is researching African textiles as a political tool of Afro-Brazilian identity.

The fruitful cooperation with ARTE will continue in 2024, allowing the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence the opportunity to have a voice in current Africa-related productions. 🌍

by the British Army from the palace of the ruler of the Kingdom of Benin in today's Nigeria in the late 19th century and sold off to museums in the global North, including Hamburg. The documentary explored questions like what should happen to the Benin Bronzes when returned to Benin, who exactly in Benin City has a claim to the Bronzes, and what kind of museum is needed to give the artifacts an adequate home.

The director of the documentary, Jean-Alexander "Sacha" Ntiviyahbwa, was at the presentation and engaged



Marion Schmidt (second from right) talked with Ute Fendler (right) and Dandara Maia Schellenberg (left) about her documentary *Yes We Can – die neue Schwarze Malerei*.



Filmmaker Jean-Alexander Ntiviyahbwa

## Cinema Africa 2023

Text SABINE GREINER  
Photos ROBERT GÖTZE/FABRICA LUX

**From 22–25 January 2023, the 14th edition of the film festival *Cinema Africa* invited the audience to a cinematic journey through a broad spectrum of African films.**

After a pandemic-related break, the renowned film festival *Cinema Africa* could finally continue in early 2023. Ute Fendler, Chair of Romance and Comparative Literature and the Cluster's Vice Dean of Internationalisation and Public Engagement, curated a program that showed audiences current cinematic narratives from Tanzania, Ghana, Cameroon, and Senegal. All of the films presented had received international attention and some had already been shown at renowned film festivals. As in previous years, the movie theatre Cineplex Bayreuth provided the fitting venue for the 14th instalment of *Cinema Africa*.

The festival began on Sunday evening by taking the audience to Zanzibar of the 1950s. *Vuta N'Kuvute (Tug of War)* is a moving film based on Adam Shafi's award-winning Swahili novel. Set in the final years of British colonisation, the story follows Denge, a young revolutionary who meets Yasmin, a runaway bride from a privileged, upper class Indian-Zanzibari family. *Tug of War* was an entry for the 2022 Academy Award Best International Feature Film category. After the screening, Gudrun Columbus Mwanyika, the leading actor who played Denge, took to the stage and talked about his experience as a Zanzibari actor working on turning the renowned novel into a film.

On the second day, the festival presented *Borga*, a German-Ghanaian coproduction on the plight of African immigrants in Germany. The film's protagonist is Kojo, a young Ghanaian, who grows up in poor conditions before immigrating to Germany. In the hopes of finding a better life and

the recognition of his family, however, he is caught in illegal activities. Leading actor Eugene Boateng was the guest of honour that evening. The charismatic actor talked about making the film and about the importance of people of colour being represented in German media.

*Saloum*, the third movie shown in the festival, was a Senegalese/Congolese co-production by Jean Luc Herbulot. The Senegalese producer Pamela Diop presented the film and talked about the challenges of managing a project of that dimension as a female Afri-

The producer of *Saloum*, Pamela Diop



Gilbert Ndi Shang moderated the discussion with actor Eugene Boateng, who represented the film *Borga*.



can producer. The film *Saloum* was well worth the effort. In the fast-paced film, a trio of mercenaries are forced to stay at a resort in the Saloum Delta. There, old acquaintances, and both human and supernatural threats await them, taking the movie from its initial action genre to a horror flick.

The grand finale of the 2023 *Cinema Africa* was a double feature. First, *Bendskins* followed three motorcycle taxi-drivers – so-called bendskins – in Cameroon. The audience received a dramatic and open-ended glimpse

into their lives: from the pot-holed gravel tracks through the chaos of the big city into their individual private challenges. For its last stop, the festival moved from Cameroon on to the outskirts of Paris. The second movie of the evening, *The Gravity*, showed how two sets of brothers fight the forces that keep them from taking off in the suburbs of France's capital during an unprecedented alignment of planets impacting actual gravity. The film's director Cédric Ido was present to explain the metaphoric level of his work and how the project was realised. 🌍

# Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture

## Hope in the Age of Compost

Text SABINE GREINER

Photos ROBERT GÖTZE – FABRICA LUX

For the third time, the Cluster of Excellence organised the *Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture* in July 2023. Established in the memory of late art curator Okwui Enwezor, each year the lecture series presents a prominent artist, curator, or scholar who engages with ground-breaking contributions to the rethinking of arts in a global perspective.

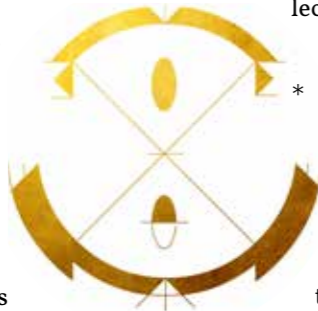
On 19 July 2023, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence and Iwalewahaus invited the interested public to the third *Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture*. This annual lecture event was instituted jointly in 2021 by Iwalewahaus and the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence in memory of the late art curator Okwui Enwezor and his outstanding contributions to the field of African and global arts. While the first two editions of the *Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture* featured speakers from the African continent, in 2023 organisers invited a collective of activists from Kültürhane, in Turkey, to contribute to the series.

Located in Mersin, Kültürhane – Turkish for “house of culture” – is a café-library that hosts public events and offers a study space with more than 10,000 books and periodicals. Kültürhane was founded in 2017 when the Turkish government came after a large group of scholars called “Academics for Peace”, resulting in a wave of dismissals at universities. As a new place of discourse and debate, hundreds of talks, concerts, video-projections, exhibitions, and workshops

have taken place in Mersin. Through these events a large community of like-minded people from different backgrounds and profiles has emerged. Kültürhane also organised humanitarian help efforts during the earthquake disaster in early 2023.

After introductory words by the event’s organiser Katharina Fink, Rüdiger Seesemann, Dean of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, gave a short and moving welcoming speech, where he especially underscored the parallels between Enwezor’s and Kültürhane’s tireless work for free thought and action. Finally, Kültürhane’s founder Ulaş Bayraktar held the online lecture entitled *Hope in the Age of Compost*. In it, the former associate professor of political science vividly discussed the role of rituals in cultural work as community building, the relation of places in regard to ritual, and both place and ritual as sources of hope, by drawing on experiences with the cultural space of Kültürhane in recent years.

While Bayraktar was unfortunately not present in Bayreuth, another representative of Kültürhane, Bediz Yilmaz, was able to join the audience at Iwalewahaus. Yilmaz lives in Mersin, practices farming, and continues academic work as independent researcher. After the lecture, the sociologist engaged in conversations and debate with the people gathered there, talking about her recent experience as an oppressed scholar in Turkey. Yilmaz spoke about her conviction that through its activist work Kültürhane will give hope to silenced academics not only in Turkey but around the world.



Scan the qr code to watch the Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture online:



Rüdiger Seesemann introduces Ulaş Bayraktar (on screen), who held the 2023 Okwui Enwezor Distinguished lecture.



Bediz Yilmaz took the questions of the audience.



Katharina Fink organised the event.

## Workshop: Intractable Problems of Human Rights

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER

In August 2023, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence research project entitled *When the Law is Not Enough: Intractable Problems of Human Rights*, which focuses on child labour, human trafficking, and LGBTIQ+ rights, held a hybrid event that featured a stakeholder workshop and its third Advanced Methods Lab at the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. The event, conducted by various experts, centred around the main theme of finding unorthodox solutions to hard problems using a mixed methods approach. Both experienced and junior researchers took part in the hybrid conference.

The 2023 *Intractable Problems of Human Rights Stakeholders Workshop and Advanced Methods Lab III*, held in August 2023, sought to interrogate and debate the three difficult and complex human rights issues of child labour, human trafficking, and LGBTIQ+ rights. The event, which took place at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa attracted a wide spectrum of stakeholders from diverse fields. These included people from academia, advanced and early career

researchers, practicing lawyers, PhD candidates, and civil society organisations.

The workshop was structured into three main parts. Firstly, participants presented different papers interrogating the status quo of these problems and the role of stakeholders in addressing these intractable problems of human rights in Africa. Secondly, special in-depth panel discussions on key legal and institutional barriers impeding the protection of these problems and the non-legal determinants for persisting violations were held. Finally, the workshop featured a third edition of the Advanced Methods Lab. In this Lab, participants delved deep in exploring and debating the mixed methods approaches that can offer unorthodox solutions for these hard socio-legal problems.

Although there was a lot of heated debate, consensus was reached on some issues, like the recognition of the in-

terdisciplinarity of these three intractable problems and the need to apply mixed methods in resolving them. There was further consensus of the need to decolonise African education and laws and to re-Africanise the same



The chair of African Legal Studies at UBT Toko Kaime  
Photos: ALS

order to formulate tailor-made solutions that are specific to the needs of an African context.

This workshop will culminate into a publication of an edited book featuring the papers that were presented at the workshop as well as excerpts from the panel discussions. It is expected that this book will be published in 2025.



The Chair of African Legal Studies together with guests contributors from academia, law and civil society organisations.

# Cluster Chronicles with **Jean Luc Raharimanana**



Jean Luc Raharimanana was the Cluster's second chronicler. Photo: Robert Götze

Text SABINE GREINER

**For the second time, the Cluster of Excellence invited an artist to visit Bayreuth in order to follow the Cluster's activities and events for a month as Cluster chronicler.**

Malagasy writer, musician, painter and photographer Jean Luc Raharimanana accompanied the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence's activities and events in May 2023. During his stay, the multi-faceted artist not only chronicled his observations and encounters in posts on social media, where he published photographs and poems, he also engaged with scholars and showcased his talent in performances and events.

On 15 May 2023 Raharimanana presented a concert together with artist Alexandre Vieira from Brazil at Bayreuth's cultural centre Kulturhaus Neuneinhalb. Under the title *Trans-*

*oceanic Musical Lecture*, the two artists, who did not speak each other's language, managed to span the musical and cultural arc between two continents in a captivating evening full of rhythm and poetry (see QR code below). Raharimanana also provided the musical accompaniment for the *35th Swahili Colloquium* that was held from 19 to 23 May 2023 (for more information see page 34).



*Empreinte* – one of Raharimanana's works at his exhibition at Iwalewahaus

During his stay, Raharimanana also prepared the exhibition *Trajectories*. From 24 May to 31 July 2023, the artist's photographs – always in

dialogue with his poems and novels – were illuminated at night in the windows of Iwalewahaus. The exhibition, presented as part of Iwalewahaus's inside/out series, featured a selection of 16 photographs Raharimanana took in Madagascar, Mayotte, and the Comoros. They are part of a larger exhibition titled *Trajectories – Travel Lines Across the Indian Ocean*.

Raharimanana's visit and contributions were organised and curated by Ute Fendler, the Cluster of Excellence's Vice Dean of Internationalisation and Public Engagement: "We are very pleased that we could win this exceptional and multitalented artist to accompany the activities of the Cluster of Excellence as Cluster Chronicler in 2023. We are even more pleased that the events and the outdoor exhibition at Iwalewahaus also brought the artist and parts of his work to the attention of the wider Bayreuth public."

Cluster chronicles with  
Jean Luc Raharimanana



*Transoceanic Musical Lectures* with  
Alexandre Vieira



Alexandre Vieira, Ute Fendler and Jean Luc Raharimanana at the *Transoceanic Musical Lectures*

## Conference in Bordeaux: African Utopias/Afrodystopias

Text LAUDE NGADI MAÏSSA

**In the summer of 2023, researchers came together in Bordeaux to discuss African Utopias and Afro-dystopias during an international conference.**

The international conference *African Utopias/Afrodystopias (Utopies Africaines/Afrodystopies: représentations et discours littéraires, médiatiques et culturels)*, organised by the centre of research "Les Afriques dans le monde" (LAM) at Bordeaux Montaigne University and the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, took place in Bordeaux, France from 28 June to 1 July, 2023. Sylvère Mbondobari, UNESCO Chair of African Diasporas, and Ute Fendler joined in the organisation of this conference in a long tradition of cooperation between LAM and the Institute of Africa Studies (IAS), Bayreuth. Laude Ngadi Maïssa joined the team for this occasion.

The symposium brought together some 30 speakers from 25 academic and research institutions in Africa, America, and Europe. Presentations were mainly in the fields of literature, philosophy, political history, sociology, and cinema, covering English, French, and Swahili corpora. The two keynote speakers for the opening and closing of the con-



Organizers and key note speakers Ute Fendler, Sylvère Mbondobari, Joseph Tonda and Jean-Godefroy Bidima (f.l.t.r.) Photo: Laude Ngadi

ference were the Cameroonian philosopher Jean-Godefroy Bidima, from Tulane University, USA, and the Gabonese sociologist Joseph Tonda from the University of Omar Bongo in Libreville, Gabon. Bidima questioned contemporary African historicist viewpoints, evoking the difficulties of current critical practices and laying the foundations for an African and global heuristic critique. Tonda discussed aspects of his ongoing research on Afro-dystopia and African eco-animism.

On the first day, the focus was on African futures in poetry and fiction. Speakers addressed the theme of the "dream of others" ("le rêve d'autrui"), visions that are imported to the African continent. The focus was on works that aim to represent the ideal African city, with an emphasis on the continent's technological and ecological challenges. Discussions on Afrofuturism, ecodystopia, and the epidemiological crisis fed into debates on intermedia productions and science fiction.



Philosopher Jean-Godefroy Bidima from Tulane University held one of the keynotes.

Photo: Ute Fendler

The topics of the following sessions focused on postcolonial perspectives on African utopias, centred in particular on Afropolitanism and inspired by the work of Achille Mbembe. Conference participants also explored questions linked to a reflection on the African dream, whose reinvention can be seen through the representation of illusions and glimmers of pan-African authenticity in the age of globalisation. Léonora Miano's Afropean and Afrofeminist utopias were also discussed at length. The conference proceedings will be forthcoming in 2025.



# TGCL: 15 Year Anniversary Workshop

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER

**From 25 to 27 October 2023, the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) Tanzania and the University of Bayreuth through the Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL) convened a workshop to commemorate the 15 years since its establishment in 2008. The three-day workshop was attended by various TGCL stakeholders, staff members of the University of Bayreuth, and the University of Dar es Salaam, TGCL alumni, and students.**

## Day One: 25 October

### Session 1: Welcome Address

TGCL Project Coordinator Petro Protas initiated the workshop, noting the historical significance of October 25 for both the University of Dar es Salaam School of Law (UDSoL) and the TGCL, as both institutions were established on this exact day, in 1961 and 2008 respectively. TGCL Project Leader Thoko Kaime welcomed attendees and introduced speakers, including

UDSoL Dean Sosteness Francis Materu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor-Academic at the UDSM Bonaventure Rutinwa, and Vice President of the University of Bayreuth Nina Nestler.

### Session 2:

**TGCL Milestones and Achievements**  
TGCL Manager Isabelle Zundel and Protas traced TGCL's historical journey, from its inception as a unit under UDSoL to its current status as a key player in regional integration and East African Community (EAC) law. They noted TGCL's 15-year existence and its extension due to its success, focusing on sponsoring LL.M. students from East African Community (EAC) partner states.

### Session 3: TGCL Stakeholders

Representatives from the German Embassy, DAAD Nairobi, the Hanns-Seidel Foundation, and TGCL alumni highlighted the support and contributions of various stakeholders. They emphasised TGCL's impact on regional law knowledge, scholarship selection, and alumni success stories. The session concluded with introductions from workshop participants.

### Session 4: Appreciation Awards

Protas moderated the session and presented awards to selected stakeholders for their dedication to TGCL, recognising their significant contributions to the Centre's success.

### Session 5: Presentation of Papers

The fifth session of the workshop featured paper presentations by TGCL scholars and other experts in regional integration law. The presentations were divided into two panels. The first panel focused on historical perspectives, statelessness, and migration in the EAC. The second panel centred on labour, capital, and human mobility, covering issues such as the legal framework for enhancing education mobility, regulating labour externalization, challenges faced by cooperative societies, and facilitating capital mobility through cross-border lending within the EAC.

## Day Two: 26 October

### Session 1: Presentation of Papers

Day Two of the workshop commenced with paper presentations organised into three panels. The first panel dis-

cussed principles of the EAC treaty, focusing on topics such as women's political rights, human rights protection, and the utilisation of preliminary ruling procedures. The second panel explored issues related to the EAC Common Market, including non-tariff barriers to trade, the right of establishment, and interstate disputes affecting freedom of movement. The final panel delved into questions surrounding political federation and constitutionalism within the EAC, addressing topics like the history and prospects of political federation and challenges in the constitutional drafting process.

### Session 2: Roundtable Discussion 1

The second session featured a roundtable discussion on TGCL's legacy, the challenges encountered, and its role in shaping legal minds since its establishment. Alumni shared personal experiences, reflecting on their journey from application to successful study and networking under TGCL's guidance. The session provided a narrative insight into the impact and significance of the TGCL in legal education and professional development.

## Day Three: 27 October

### Session 1: DAAD Presentation

The first session on the final day featured a presentation by the DAAD Nairobi Delegation, highlighting opportunities for scholars and alumni. Komivi M. Lasmothey emphasised DAAD's achievements, including gender inclusivity in scholarships and various programs targeting leadership, policy-makers, and PhD candidates. Benefits for scholars included networking opportunities, DAAD assistance to alumni, funding for networking programs, study visits to Germany, and research grants.

### Session 2: Roundtable Discussion 2

The second and final session was dedicated to discussing the sustainability of TGCL's future and the ongoing collaboration between the Universities of Bayreuth and Dar es Salaam, especially in the light of reduced funding from DAAD. Materu initiated discussions on funding challenges and proposed seeking alternative funders, while Protas suggested engaging stakeholders and implementing basket funding. Zundel emphasised col-

laboration beyond teaching, with a focus on research and publication funding from DAAD. Audience members suggested soliciting other donors, seeking support from influential institutions and individuals, and emphasising in-country/in-region programs. Materu addressed concerns about government connections and UDSM's commitment to TGCL. Additionally, the possibility of joint degree programs for further collaboration was positively discussed.

The workshop was undoubtedly a success, evidenced by the fruitful discussions held on the sustainability of TGCL and the ongoing collaboration between the universities of Bayreuth and Dar es Salaam amidst funding challenges.

## Launch of New Website

The event also included the launch of the new TGCL website, where a full workshop report can be found.







## Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Colonial Correspondences

Text ERIC A. ANCHIMBE  
GLORY ESSIEN OTUNG

**The International Conference of the project *Colonial Letters and the Contact of Knowledges* took four days, with 34 presentations by scholars from 13 countries across four continents.**

The project, *Colonial Letters and the Contact of Knowledges*, of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, organised its final international hybrid conference on the theme *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Colonial Correspondences* from 11 to 14 April 2023 at the University of Bayreuth. The conference brought together 34 speakers from 13 countries (Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Germany, Ghana, Israel, Kenya, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, Switzerland, USA, and Zimbabwe) across four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. The four-day conference focused on the outcomes of colonial contacts, and the ensuing

conflicts, contestations, and eventual coalescence, co-habitations and/or hybridisation of 'knowledges' during and after colonialism. These were approached from multidisciplinary perspectives, especially linguistics, history, literature, communication studies, anthropology, and sociology.

The trajectories of colonial correspondences traced in the conference presentations were principally of the British Empire but with insights into other colonisations, for instance, by the French. The broad spectrum of colonial experiences covered included Algeria, the British Colony of Aden, British Southern Cameroons, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Southern Rhodesia, and Togo. These colonial encounters offered solid in-depth glimpses into the discursive construction of colonial agendas, the enactment of power, the restructuring of identities, and, above all, the state of mind of the actors involved in the entire colonial enterprise.

The conference opened with a welcome address by the Coordinator of the project, Eric A. Anchimbe. Thereafter, the Dean, Rudiger Seesemann, and Vice-Dean for Research, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, took turns to officially welcome participants to Bayreuth and to introduce the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. They reiterated the working premise of the Cluster of Excellence that research on Africa is best pursued together with scholars in Africa.

Mompoloki M. Bagwasi from the University of Botswana delivered an insightful keynote address on *Power and Struggle in Letters Written by British Administrators and Batswana Chiefs Between 1885 and 1966*. Bagwasi unveiled the dynamics of colonial power relations in the British Protectorate Bechuanaland, now the Republic of Botswana, from a sociolinguistic and critical discourse analytical perspective, exploring how linguistic devices such as ad-

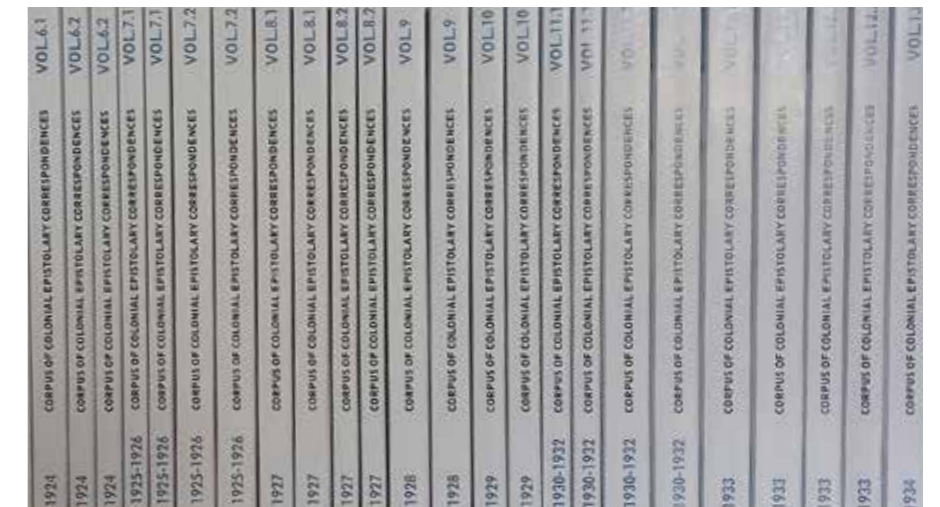
dress forms, proverbs, respect forms, etc. were strategically used by British colonial administrators and Batswana chiefs to either enact or bridge power gaps. Similarly, the plenary speaker, Hans-Georg Wolf of the University of Potsdam, revealed, from a cultural linguistics perspective, how metaphorical constructions were used inconsistently in colonial correspondence to represent the colonial mindset by the coloniser as well as some colonised authors.

The conference papers were grouped thematically into seven panels. Panel 1, *Contestations and Negotiations of Knowledges*, discussed the disputation of religious (Islamic, Christian missionary), medical (midwifery, healthcare), and cultural epistemologies between colonial and colonised actors in British Southern Cameroons, Northern Nigeria, Kenya, and Southern Rhodesia. Panel 2, *Contestations and Negotiations of Power*, dealt with colonial power strategies like indirect rule and cross-border governance and indigenous hereditary power structures. Correspondences from Ghana, Algeria, Nigeria, and Cameroon were analysed in this panel. Panel 3, *Resistance*, captured patterns of resistance to colonial rule and practices, and how letter correspondences became the arena for performing resistance. Panel 4, *Contestation and Negotiation of Identity*, revealed the different ways group identities were created and propagated within the colonies. In some cases, the colonisers intentionally misrepresented the colonised as a means of justifying colonial agendas. Panel 5, *Gendered Representations*, explored gender dynamics in colonial exchanges from the British Colony of Aden, Kenya, and Cameroon, highlighting the interplay of race, culture, and colonial power. Panel 6, *Authorship Dynamics*, investigated the attribution and authentication of writings by the colonised within the lopsided power dynamics of colonialism. Focusing on letter writing agencies, diaries, journals, and transnational friendship letters, issues of positionality, acceptability, and status were juxtaposed with colonial writings that often occupied the higher tiers of authenticity. Panel 7, *Heritages and Commodifications*, traced indigenous art repatriations, the loss of indigenous cultural symbols, and

the colonial commodification of indigenous resources and artefacts during and after colonialism both within colonial correspondences and contemporary discourses.

The conference was a huge success not only in the breadth of themes addressed but also in the multidisciplinary

approaches used to do so. Participants as well as project members found the domain of colonial correspondence to be still understudied, especially from a data-driven approach, and worthy of additional research, in spite of the often-depressing experiences in these correspondences.



Volumes of the *Corpus of Colonial Epistolary Correspondences* collected by the project.



Rüdiger Seesemann, Dean of the Cluster, welcomes conference participants.



Participants listening to the plenary

## 35th Swahili Colloquium 2023:

# Mashujaa! ReCONFIGURING Swahili Studies

Text DUNCAN TARRANT

Photos ROBERT GÖTZE – FABRICA LUX

From 19–21 May, 2023, the University of Bayreuth held the 35th edition of the Swahili Colloquium at Iwalewahaus in a hybrid format for the first time ever. The colloquium is a well-established forum hosted annually at the University of Bayreuth, which brings together a large international community of scholars and researchers from different disciplines.

The global pandemic meant that the previous years' editions of the Swahili Colloquium had been held online with a reduced programme, but 2023 saw a return to a full three-day program, featuring two roundtables, twelve panels consisting of 38 presentations, two artistic performances, and several book launches. Scholars and researchers from over 30 different countries were in attendance. The multidisciplinary approach, including contributions from linguistics and literary studies to anthropology and history, particularly accounts for the appeal of the colloquium.

For the 35th edition, the colloquium was lucky to have three visiting artists present: Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor (Kenya), Jean Luc Raharimanana (Madagascar), and Nash MC (Tanzania). On Friday night, participants sampled some of Nash MC's Swahili hip-hop/rap. On Saturday night, there was a musical book reading: Owuor read sections from her novel *The Dragonfly Sea* accompanied by and in conversation with the music and songs of Raharimanana and his traditional Malagasy instrument. A small exhibition displayed paintings by students of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Arts in Mauritius, who created artworks in relation to *The Dragonfly Sea*. The audience also heard from the winners of last year's Mabati Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature, with the poets and authors joining digitally to share and read from their work. Book launches, like that of the poetry anthology *In This Fragile World: Swahili Poetry of Commitment* by Ustadh Mahmoud Mau, edited by Annachiara Raia and Clarissa Vierke, complemented the program.

The colloquium's overarching theme was "Mashujaa! ReCONFIGURING



The Kenyan poet and imam Ustadh Mahmoud Mau

Swahili Studies". The aim was to centre discussion and critical inquiry of the discipline(s) and foundations of Swahili Studies – in particular, by bringing key figures and pioneers in the study of Swahili language, literature, history, and culture. By zeroing in on life stories of key figures of several spheres of intellectual, material, cultural, social, and symbolic



Kenyan writer Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

production in East Africa, the goal was not only to expand the critical examination of Swahili Studies, but also to make an impact in African Studies more broadly, by opening up ways of breaking through the (meta-)physical empire and breaking ground for new archives and canons.

This theme was evident throughout



Organiser Clarissa Vierke

the weekend, but nowhere more so in the final panel on the first day entitled *Reconfiguring Swahili Studies*. The first half of the panel was entitled *More than Three Swahili Women*, which aimed to demonstrate how "matrifocal knowledge practices create communities of practice" with examples from the lives of three Swahili heroines. This led to the second part of the panel, a round-



Artist Jean Luc Raharimanana from Madagascar

table called *Reconfiguring Swahili Studies: Is 'Uswahili' at the Heart of the Process?*, which posited that a critical rethinking of Swahili Studies has to begin with an understanding of Uswahili in its pluralistic globality. The roundtables sparked important discussions about positionality and relationality within the multiple Swahili worlds and imaginaries.



left: Participants came together in Bayreuth for three days for the 35th Swahili Colloquium.

right: Ustadh Mahmoud Mau, Jean Luc Raharimanana, Rukiya Harith, Duncan Tarrant, Yvonne Owuor, Clarissa Vierke and Annachiara Raia after the book launch of Ustadh Mahmoud Mau's poetry anthology accompanied by readings and soundings.

# Learning Beyond the Classroom: A Conference at a High Altitude

Round table at the end of the conference with represents of the three participating Universities: Deivid Pacosillo (UPEA), Edwin Quispe (UPEA), Alejandra Martinez (UCB), Carlos Kölbl (UBT)



Text REBEKKA KRAUSS

**The Cluster project *Learning Beyond the Classroom: Coping with Illiteracy in Urban Contexts in Benin and Bolivia* led by Erdmute Alber and Carlos Kölbl organised a conference in Bolivia on the topic in the summer of 2023.**

In August, 2023, the project *Learning Beyond the Classroom: Coping with Illiteracy in Urban Contexts in Benin and Bolivia* held an exciting conference in the twin Bolivian cities of La Paz and El Alto, the latter more than 4,000 meters above sea level. This conference followed a participatory research workshop (ECRIS, see NAB 2022) in February 2022 and almost one year of field research conducted by Rebekka Krauß in the two cities. This continuity was very visible: many participants in the ECRIS were also at the conference and it also took a partly participatory approach. The event's purpose was to share selected results from our

research in Bolivia (as well as Benin) in an academic but participatory frame, bringing together local perspectives on learning beyond the classroom and connecting our research on the two continents.

The collaboration with the psycho-educational science degree program at the Catholic University of Bolivia (UCB) in La Paz started by presenting the project and first insights to them immediately after the ECRIS. This co-operation was highlighted by a small research workshop for students in November 2022 organized by Rebekka Krauss that led to a contribution at the conference. The official collaboration with the Public University of El Alto (Universidad Pública de El Alto/UPEA) began in November 2022: one professor of educational sciences participated in ECRIS, which led to further networking.

The *private school* UCB located in La Paz is mainly attended by students from

middle- and upper-class families. Meanwhile, only a few students from La Paz study at the Public University of El Alto. Both cities' identities, as well as the (higher) educational landscape in general, are highly racialised due to the persistence of colonial social relations and discrimination against El Alto's largely Aymara population. Numerous stereotypes in both directions impede interaction between the two institutions. Thus, one exciting achievement of this conference was bringing together both local universities.

The conference started in El Alto, with UPEA officials welcoming about 500 in-person attendees, mainly students from the two universities, and it was also broadcast on the university's TV channel. The keynote talk, "Rock, Paper, Scissors: The Necessity of a Dialectic against Illiteracy", by Dany Illanes Huanca (UPEA), placed reading and writing competences within a broader set of communication tools and discussed their meaning for learn-

ing processes. Then, Carlos Kölbl introduced the research project. Subsequently, students engaged strongly in a discussion on the topics of the talks and ethics and principles of (transnational) research on illiteracies.

The second day of the conference took place at UCB in La Paz. It started with a contribution on the current status of studies about literacy practices in Latin America by Marianela Diaz Carrasco (UCB), who was the project's first partner in Bolivia before leaving the Institute of Post-Graduate Studies of the University of San Andres (UMSA) for work in Mexico. This was followed by Issifou Abou Moumouni's presentation *Learning Beyond the Classroom: Empirical Reconstructions in Parakou - Conceptual and Theoretical Consequences*. To get insights on features concerning illiteracy in a very distant but also in some ways similar country was inspiring for the participants. Those findings were reflected in Rebekka Krauß's talk on her research results from El Alto and La Paz.

Windsor M. Torrico Carvajal (UPEA) discussed the impact of alphabetisation as a hegemonic instrument on the learning of local knowledge and cosmology/worldview, in reference to historically changing political purposes that led governments to give access to education or implement educational reforms.

Ruben Hilari Quispe (Aymara linguist) and Antonia Schneider (anthropologist and DAAD lecturer) looked at local communication practices and discussed Aymara semiotic perspectives as expressed in daily practices in El Alto, drawing on their insights from the 2022 ECRIS. Specific Aymara historical and contemporary educational practices, beyond state institutions and at the intersection of communities and schools, formed the central topic of Denise Arnold's talk.

The last three presentations in particular reflected the importance of situating the multiplicity of literacy practices and the roles of different modes of communication and textualities in local learning. They also reflected ambivalences between (never neutral) state-provided formal education and

(sometimes romanticised) local practices of knowledge transmission that deal with such transformations.

For its final day, the conference returned to UPEA in El Alto for deeper participatory discussion. The day started with a presentation from a UCB student group, which discussed its insights and personal learning during the small research workshop on the literacy practices of market vendors with low formal educational experience.

The conference continued with several topics concerning phenomena of (il) literacies in El Alto. Its participants, including professors, researchers, students, stakeholders, and persons with low educational trajectories, divided into smaller discussion groups to reflect on multilingualism and diversity of literacy practices, on the recognition of not-formalised knowledge, and on communication in contexts of different textualities.

This participatory approach allowed for deepened insights into practices from people with very different perspectives and lived experiences. It was important not only to follow the idea of participative paradigms, like "not talking about illiteracy without illiteracy people", but also for all parties to learn from each other by sharing different perspectives. After each group presented its main conclusions, a broader discussion on multiplicities of literacies in a multilingual context took place.

The conference finished with a roundtable in which members of each university reflected on their own learning and the new insights concerning the phenomena of (il) literacies and learning beyond the classroom they gained during the conference.

This conference could be regarded as a space in which the different talks and the discussions contributed powerfully to connect different perspectives and experiences on (il) literacy and not-formalised learning practices. Here, we must again emphasise our gratitude to both universities for their efforts and enthusiastic engagement.



Rebekka Krauß (UBT) is thanking to all participants and collaborators for enabling this conference.



Deivid Pacosillo, director of educational science career (UPEA) is handing over presents to the guests.



Issifou Moumouni's (UPEA) talk was translated to Spanish.

# Art Passport

— Artworks from the Iwalewahaus Collection on Loan in Inter\*national Exhibitions



Installation views, 'When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting', courtesy of Zeitz MOCAA. Photography by Dillon Marsh.



Installation views, 'When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting', courtesy of Zeitz MOCAA. Photography by Dillon Marsh.

## When We See Us A Century of Black Figuration in Painting

18 November 2022–31 August 2023,  
Cape Town,  
Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA)

When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting explores Black self-representation and celebrates global Black subjectivities and Black consciousness from pan-African and pan-Diasporic perspectives.

The exhibition boldly brings together artworks from the last 100 years by Black artists working globally, into dialogue with leading Black thinkers, writers, and poets who are active today.

Curators // Koyo Kouoh, Tandazani Dhlakama / Thato Mogotsi

Exhibition Tour:  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland: 25 May to 13 October 2024  
Centre for Fine Arts Brussels, Belgium: 7 February to 17 August 2025  
Liljevalchs Konsthall Stockholm, Sweden: September 2025–August 2026

## Black Orpheus Jacob Lawrence and the Mbari Club

Black Orpheus will explore the connection between African American artist Jacob Lawrence and his contemporaries based in the Global South through the Nigerian journal Black Orpheus. The exhibition features over 125 objects, including Lawrence's little-known 1964–65 Nigeria series, works by the artists featured in Black Orpheus, archival images, videos, and letters.

The Mbari Artists and Writers Club was an organisation of Nigerian-based artists, writers, and dramatists promoting modern African and international artistic practice. The core of the exhibition centres on the Mbari arts and culture magazine Black Orpheus (1957–67).

Text // Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
Curators // Kimberli Gant, PhD, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Brooklyn Museum / Ndubuisi Ezeluomba, PhD, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) Curator of African Art

Exhibition Tour:  
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia:  
7 October 2022 to  
8 January 2023 (see NAB 2022)  
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, Louisiana:  
10 February to 7 May 2023  
Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio:  
3 June–3 September 2023



© Black Orpheus – New Orleans Museum of Art  
*Black Orpheus: Jacob Lawrence and the Mbari Club*, 2023,  
Images with kind permission by the New Orleans Museum of Art:  
Photography by Sesthasak Boonchai



© Black Orpheus – Toledo Museum of Art, photography credit line: Courtesy of Natalie Tranelli Photography, LLC

# Artist in Residence

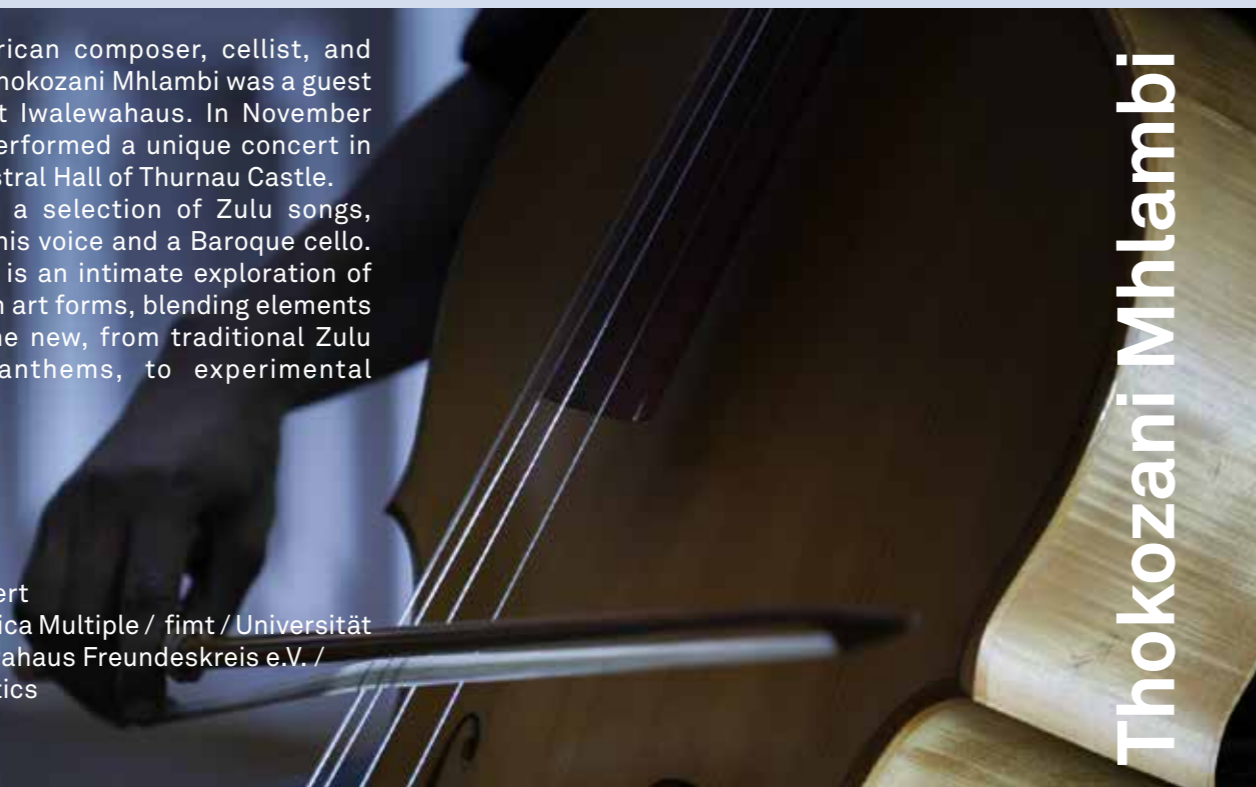
The South African composer, cellist, and cultural scholar Thokozani Mhlambi was a guest resident artist at Iwalewahaus. In November 2022, Mhlambi performed a unique concert in the historic Ancestral Hall of Thurnau Castle.

He presented a selection of Zulu songs, accompanied by his voice and a Baroque cello. Mhlambi's music is an intimate exploration of traditional African art forms, blending elements of the old and the new, from traditional Zulu amahubos, or anthems, to experimental soundscapes.

Text // Inken Böbert  
Cooperation // Africa Multiple / fimt / Universität Bayreuth / Iwalewahaus Freundeskreis e.V. / RS Arts & Aesthetics

Photo: Jens Wagner

Thokozani Mhlambi



# Guests

## Magdalena Solano — Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

Magdalena Solano, a renowned Fellow at the David Booth Conservation Department and Assistant Paintings Conservator at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), visited Germany with one of her destinations being the Iwalewahaus. Her focus is on the works of artist Uche Okeke. Students had the unique opportunity to meet with her and learn more about her work and passion for art restoration.

Text // Inken Böbert

## Louisa Uchum Egbunike and Nathan Richards — Durham University

Louisa Uchum Egbunike, Associate Professor in African Literature at Durham University, accompanied by her colleague Nathan Richards, embarked on a research visit to Iwalewahaus. Their primary focus was on the Biafra War, particularly analysing the works of various Nsukka artists such as Obiora Udechukwu. In collaboration with the Nigeria Arts Society UK (NASUK), Egbunike curates the exhibition *Legacies of Biafra*.

This research visit promises to deepen our understanding of the profound impact of the Biafra War on literature and art, thus illuminating its enduring legacy.

Text // Inken Böbert

# Film



## Wangari Grace and Sven Kacirek — Colonialism

In June 2023, musician Sven Kacirek and storyteller Wangari Grace presented their expanded theatre piece *Colonialism – A Musical Oral History Performance* for children and adults in Bayreuth. Developed with support from the GoetheInstitut, the play examines colonial history from 1870 to 1990 through an African lens. It aims to foster understanding of past events to address current social and political issues and prevent future oppression. The critical exploration of European perspectives and the portrayal of colonial actions, accompanied by live music by Kacirek, sparked lively discussions after the performances. The play's versatility, catering to audiences of all ages, contributes to its relevance, prompting discussions on colonialism and contemporary racism.

Text // Katharina Greven

## Taiwo Shango — The Second Day after Death

In December 2023, the film *Taiwo Shango, or The Second Day after Death*, was presented at the Zeughauskino Berlin, serving as a bridging film from 2023 to 2024. This film originates from the estate of Nina Fischer-Stephan, whose impressive photos and documents were already on display at the Floating Assemblies exhibition at Iwalewahaus in 2023. The fascinating story of the film illuminates the early phase of post-colonialism in Nigeria. It is characterised by the dramatic collision of rationalism, traditional expectations, and family history. This unique German-Nigerian co-production combines historical events with contemporary drama. Following the screening, Christine Matzke invited the audience to discuss the various perspectives of this film. In January 2024, the film was shown at Iwalewahaus.

Text // Inken Böbert



Film still © Nina Fischer-Stephan

Photo: Remi Raji

Photo: Goethe Institut / Julian Manjehahi

# Exhibitions

at the Iwalewahaus

## Floating Assemblies

— The Collection from the Perspective of “movement”



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

With this exhibition, Iwalewahaus attempted to shed light on its collection from the perspective of “movement”: Collections have ups and downs like ebb and flow. They create knowledge and new forms and reflect networks of relationships. Works, stories, and people gather and separate again. Works of art come and go, for example, in exhibitions at external institutions. They move in and out of collections. Some take their own path, traveling between museums and galleries or returning to their original context and their original owners. Well-known works of art and new stories come together and the unexpected comes to the surface.

The exhibition consisted of eight areas, each dedicated to a leitmotif: “Going” – “Melting” – “Assembling” – “Inclusion Diamond” – “Glitch Textures” – “Beauty” – “Together” – “AL’Umma, One Society Celebrating Life.”

An exhibition is moving, which was also noticeable in various contributions to the accompanying program, for example, during the visit by representatives from the Albert Schweitzer Hospice Bayreuth. Under the leitmotif “Going”, the first room dealt with a surprisingly colorful approach to death, while the second room entered a dark atmosphere. This was not surprising, as the artist Talya Lubinsky was dealing with the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

In the third room, under the title “Assembling”, stimulating discussions about favourite sculptures and comparisons with well-known figures took place. “Beauty”, the theme of the fourth room, was astonishing. Colourful clothes made one dream of vacation and sun, while the sewing work caused sleepless nights, formed the antithesis to sign painting and graphics.

While in the so-called “Inclusion Diamond room,” one could familiarise oneself with the possibilities of participation for visitors with disabilities; DJ Clerk provoked under the title “Glitch Textures” with amalgamations of sound and image to create conscious visual and auditory irritations, i.e., with programmed disruptive effects, precisely those glitches.

Under the title “Together”, the Friends of Iwalewahaus, a group which has existed for 10 years, was honoured together with the artist Yassine Balbzioui.

“AL’Umma, Society Celebrating Life” showed colour photographs taken by Mallam Mudi Yahaya over many years and put them in dialogue with the black and white photos by Nina Fischer-Stephan.

Text // Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
 Curator // Felicia Nitsche / Talya Lubinsky / Katharina Greven / Nicole Marina Klug / Dandara Maia Schellenberg / Alexandra Kuhnke / Katharina Fink / Philipp Schramm / Mallam Mudi Yahaya / Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
 Curatorial Assistance // Gabriel Chuchuba / Ana Madai Zavala Villalobos / Benjamin Zorn  
 Project Advisory // Mareike Palmeira / Mireya Palmeira / Gisela Kayser

## Going

Upon entering the first exhibition room of the micro-exhibition “Going” visitors were surprised by the fascinating portrayal of dealing with death. At first glance, the coffins are not recognizable as such. Coffins of the Ga people, one of the most significant ethnic groups around the Ghanaian capital Accra, were on display, and they were truly captivating. Here, visitors were immersed in a world where figurative coffins are not merely final resting places but vivid narratives of the lives and legacies of the deceased. Each of these intricate artworks tells its own story, providing a fascinating insight into the rich culture and traditions of the Ga. This presentation continued in another room, where visitors eventually encountered a fish, vegetables, a lobster, and other unusual forms.

Text // Inken Böbert  
 Curator // Felicia Nitsche



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

## Melting

In the second room “Melting,” the impressive works of artist Talya Lubinsky are gathered, who dedicates herself with great devotion to the artistic exploration of the Flossenbürg Memorial. Through the immediate proximity to the granite quarry next to the memorial, she repeatedly finds new inspirations to keep the memory of the atrocities and human rights violations alive. Her artworks are not only aesthetically appealing but also serve as a powerful reminder to confront the dark past. Talya Lubinsky is known for her sensitive approach to this delicate subject and her ability to evoke a deep emotional resonance through her art.

Text // Inken Bübert  
 Curator // Katharina Fink

## Together

Since 2013, Iwalewahaus has had a circle of friends – people who support art with passion. Reason enough to dedicate an exhibition room to the Friends of Iwalewahaus for a 10th anniversary show. Yassine Balbzioui was the surprise guest. Of course, Balbzioui didn’t come empty-handed, but had painted a gift. For the first time, he created a painting in watercolour on the wall of the exhibition room.

The Friends of Iwalewahaus demonstrate that art is a shared journey. They invite artists, encourage, inspire, and criticise. The works that gather in this room and everywhere in and around the house would not be visible here today without their input: Yassine Balbzioui, Obou Gbais, Ndidi Dike – thanks to our friends, they are always at Iwalewahaus.

“I believe we can fly together!” said Yassine Balbzioui.

Text // Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
 Curator // Katharina Fink  
 Curatorial Assistance // Gabriel Chuchuba



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

## Assembling

In the room Assembling, stone sculptures from different times and places in Zimbabwe come together. Since the 1980s, these works are part of the Iwalewahaus collection. Works by Davison Chakawa, Gift Chengu, Wanda Luke, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Alice Musarara and many more were on view. What their creators have in common is the way they work together – in collectives, with and in nature. European inscriptions still shape the reception of the stone sculptures today, and local actors have been and continue to be deliberately overlooked. However, it is precisely these artists who write art history. In their assembly, their works tell of being human, being female and life, which includes spirits, animals, and nature.

Text / Curator // Katharina Greven



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© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

## Beauty

The concept of beauty in Yoruba philosophy serves as the foundation of Iwalewahaus. Iwalewa, which translates to “character is beauty,” and encapsulates beauty as innate quality beyond form, embraces an interrelationship between moral force, integrity, and accumulation of divine powers.

Collecting at Iwalewahaus embraces the multiplicity of aesthetics on the African continent that reflect this inseparability of art and life in ever new ways.

The exhibition room in turn reflects the symbolic representation of beauty through various visual depictions, that reveal the deep interlacing of spirit, community, ancestors, nature, and human experience through a curatorial snapshot of the moment.

Text / Curators // Nicole Marina Klug / Dandara Maia Schellenberg



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

## AL'UMMA — Society Celebrating Life

This exhibition took us to northern Nigeria and presented, through the lens of photography, the cultural richness of Hausa culture. The Arabic word “AL'UMMA” opened the view to fascinating architecture, aesthetics, and fashionable diversity.

The exhibition featured two artistic positions: One from the German photographer Nina Fischer-Stephan (1922–2018), taken in northern Nigeria in the early 1960s. A second contemporary perspective was provided by the Nigerian artist, writer, and archivist Mallam Mudi Yahaya, who has been photographing in the city of Zaria for more than eighteen years. He was an artist in residence at the Iwalewahaus archive.

Text // Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
Curator // Mallam Mudi Yahaya / Sigrid Horsch-Albert  
Curatorial Assistance // Ana Madai Zavala Villalobos / Benjamin Zorn  
Project Advisory // Mareike Palmeira / Mireya Palmeira / Gisela Kayser  
Cooperation // Modern Art Film Archiv, Berlin

## The Glitch — Archive by Clerk

a contemporary artistic  
expression

Glitch Art – emerged in late 1960s from new technologies i.e. video production and molts to a playground for contemporary digital artists. Over time digital artists elevate the error to an art form and the disruptive digital effects became an unconventional way of artistic digital expression.

CLERK, music producer, DJ and visual designer got invited at Iwalewahaus for a residency as part of the project “Beats from the Archive”. The installation and concept album ARCHIVE persists of archival informations, found sounds and field recordings transformed in visual and auditive Glitch-Textures.

Text / Curator / Alexandra Kuhnke





© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.

## Mulala Landry — La Sape and Transhumanism

Mulala Landry, a Congolese painter, merges La Sape and Transhumanism in his debut exhibiton at Iwalewahaus. Influenced by Moke and Chéri Samba, Landry briefly studied at Kinshasa’s Academy of Fine Arts. His vibrant urban paintings feature Congolese women, musicians, and La Sape members, symbolizing peace after civil wars. Influential figures like André Matsoua and musicians such as Papa Wemba and Gims shaped La Sape’s cultural significance. Sapeurs consider themselves artists, showcasing flamboyant style. Landry’s art intersects with Transhumanism, exploring human potential through technology.

Text // Inken Böbert  
Curator // Sigrid Horsch-Albert

## inside/out — Photography Exhibition by Jean Luc Raharimanana

In May 2023, the captivating photography series by Artist in the Cluster Jean Luc Raharimanana in the innovative window projection exhibition inside/out, took place. Titled Trajectoires, Raharimanana intricately waves the diverse landscape of Madagascar, connecting people and places. Renowned as a poet, novelist, playwright, and editor, Raharimanana offered a unique perspective on the world, marked by lyrical beauty and poetic depth.

Curator / Curator Programme // Katharina Greven

Titel Photograph: Pature du couvent



© Jean Luc Raharimanana

# New Additions

## to the Iwalewahaus Collection



© Iwalewahaus, University Bayreuth.



## Collection — Kleine-Gunk

Thanks to Bernd Kleine-Gunk’s commitment to the Iwalewahaus collection, and the renewed support from the University Foundation, twelve paintings from his private collection were recorded as new additions to the Iwalewahaus inventory in 2023.

This year’s selection includes artworks by the Congolese artist Mulala Landry, who has recently achieved high international acclaim and is now increasingly mentioned with such important classics of modern and contemporary African art as Chéri Samba, Chéri Cherin, or Monsengwo Kejwamfi, known as Moké.

Landry was born in 1976, lives and works in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and is considered one of the outstanding representatives of the School of Kinshasa.

The donated works formed the basis for a solo exhibition in Iwalewahaus in the same year, 2023.

Text // Sigrid Horsch-Albert



# The 2023 Activities of the ACCs in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Nigeria

As in previous years, the African Cluster Centres (ACCs) continued to advance their research endeavours and expand their academic network in 2023 while jointly working on the Cluster agenda “Reconfiguring African Studies”.

Text OUSSÉNI SORÉ

**ACC Ouagadougou has maintained its momentum, making a significant contribution to the agenda of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, namely the Reconfiguration of African Studies.**

In 2023, ACC Ouagadougou focused on scientific activities and meetings, supporting young scholars through doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships and the publication of scientific works. Under the responsibility of Fernand Bationo, a panel was organised on “Marriage(s) in the Context of Burkina Faso: Challenges and Prospects”. Based on the increased occurrence of divorce in recent years in Burkina Faso, the panel was intended as a forum for sharing knowledge relating to marriage in the context of Burkina Faso. Discussions focused on customary and transcultural marriage mechanisms, and the Christian, Muslim, and civil conception of marriage. The concepts of marriage, rights and duties, the conditions for divorce and remarriage, the issues involved in civil marriage, the challenges and prospects, as well as the power of women and family harmony were addressed. It emerged from the discussions that the success of marriage depends on the well-being of society. Hence the need for society to create synergy between the differ-

ent conceptions of this sacred union, as the happiness and harmony of Burkina Faso society depends on it.

Under the leadership of Lassané Yameogo, an international colloquium was organised on “Security Crises and Population Displacements: A Cross-section of Mobility and Immobility in the Sahelian Strip”. The discussions focused on a range of issues relating to the realities experienced by the people of the Sahel belt. This scientific meeting mobilised 51 papers from academics from the West African sub-region: Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso.

Lead by Eveline Sawadogo/Compaoré, ACC Ouagadougou paid a vibrant tribute to Fatoumata Badini/Kinda through a book dedicated to her. The event was held on 7 March 2024 at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo. Badini/Kinda, Burkina Faso’s first female full professor of sociology, is an eminent figure in the academic world who devoted her academic career to the study of the complex dynamics shaping Burkina Faso society. The tribute was an opportunity for scholars as well as institutional and societal actors working on gender issues to get to know Badini/Kinda better through her biography and bibliography.

ACC Ouagadougou also plays an active

role in the activities organised by the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo. For instance, by taking part in the “Doctoriales” of the Arts and Humanities PhD School, held from 12 to 13 July 2023, the Centre was able to present its various scientific productions, its areas of research, and the opportunities offered to young researchers.

ACC Ouagadougou has remained dynamic in the field of international scientific cooperation. From 15 to 21 October, the annual meeting of the Academic Coordinators of the African Cluster Centres (ACC) was held at Rhod-

## ACC Ouagadougou

des University of Makhanda, South Africa. These rotating annual meetings provide an opportunity for the coordinators to discuss projects, programs, and other activities with a view to strengthening their collaboration. The theme of this year’s conference was “Advancing the Strategic Collaborations Towards the Second Phase of the Cluster of Excellence”. Exchanges and discussions focused on the steps to be taken for Cluster 2.0, the different activities, projects, and programs of the Cluster, as well as the various opportunities offered to other ACCs and the contribution of ACC coordinators to the Cluster renewal project and the provision of a Cluster outlook document to the Management Board. Exchanges with the Director of Rhodes University ACC, the researchers, and the university authorities revealed some excellent prospects for scientific collaboration.

ACC Ouagadougou is strongly con-

The Digital Solutions team visited UNILAG-ACC from the 18th to 26th of January 2023 and were hosted by the Head of IT, UNILAG-ACC, Bilais Alayaki

tributing to the Digital Research Environment (DRE). From 10 to 12 April 2024, the Cluster organised a conference at Maasai Lodge, in Nairobi National Park, Kenya. Participants from the four ACCs participated in the conference. From ACC Ouagadougou, Natéwindé Sawadogo took part in the meeting. The discussions resulted in a strong commitment from the different ACC representatives to seriously consider the DRE as a transformative agent.

### Early Career

As part of the Cluster’s Early Career program, ACC Ouagadougou welcomed five doctoral students in 2023, comprising three women and two men. The aim is to enable the doctoral students to complete their PhDs and to build the capacity of the young researchers who are expected to complete their fellowships with scientific publications. Furthermore, under the leadership of Banhoro, a seminar was organised in May 2023, including 2021 and 2022 Fellows, to enable them to present the results of their research and gather comments and suggestions. This seminar led to the publication of a collective volume in December 2023.

### Book Publications

During 2023, the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo ACC also worked on the publication of several books:

■ *Genre, Société et Développement en Afrique*, by Eveline Compaoré/Sawadogo, Moubassié Sigué, Yisso Fidèle Bacye, and Valérie Rouamba/Ouedraogo.

In partnership with the Laboratory Gender and Development at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, a collective work has been published. The book bears witness to the lasting impact of Fatoumata Badini/Kinda on social science research, and in particular on gender issues in Africa. The articles that make up the book explore themes such as gender equality, gender relations, intersectionality, development policies, and many other subjects relevant to the African continent.

■ *Regards croisés de jeunes chercheurs en sciences du langage, sciences sociales et humaines*, by Ousséni Sore, Lassina Soma and Yacouba Banhoro.

As part of the Early Career program, ACC Ouagadougou has been offering doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships to young researchers since October 2020, enabling them to conduct innovative research projects. Following the first book by the scholarship holders published in 2022, a collective work was published in December 2023. This volume follows a seminar organised to enable the Fellows to take stock of the research carried out under the fellowship. The volume, which includes twelve scientific contributions, addresses various themes: security challenges, terrorism, language teaching and learning, peace and social cohesion, urban mobility, women’s leadership, health crises and management, and endogenous knowledge.



On 16th November, 2023, Ayodele Yusuff and Abisoye Eleshin invited primary school students to the premiere of the Folktales Animation Project.

■ *Histoire de la Haute-Volta de 1897 à 1947: Création, dislocation et reconstitution*, by Magloire Somé and Yacouba Banhoro.

This book explores fifty years of what might be described as the “First Upper Volta” of a young state born of French colonisation in Africa, which ended with the Niger-Volta region, created in 1897, and the signing of the Franco-English convention, which fixed the border of the future Burkina Faso on the Black Volta, or Mouhoun, river. The book looks at the literary, ethnographic, and artistic aspects of the French colonisation of Upper Volta, and the coalition of forces that led to its reconstitution in 1947. This is a work done outside of the framework of the Cluster, however, it is by one of its members.

■ *COVID-19 in Africa, Volumes I & II*, by Susan Arndt, Yacouba Banhoro, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, and Peter Simatei.

These volumes are a collaborative



Coordinators Ousséni Soré (Ouagadougou), Tom Mboya (Moi), Doris Löhr and Robert Debusmann (both from Bayreuth) met with ACC Rhodes director Enocent Msindo in Makhanda.

work between the various ACCs about COVID-19. They offer a multiplicity of perspectives, enabling readers to acquire a variety of viewpoints on the pandemic and its impact. Several disciplinary approaches to the pandemic are also presented, as well as an in-depth comparative analysis.

■ *Magazine ACC OUAGA MAG: Capitalisation des activités du Pôle d’Excellence de 2020 à 2022*, by Fernand Bationo.

This first edition of the ACC Ouagadougou magazine focuses on the creation, objectives, members, Fellows, and the ACC network and its contribution over the past three years to research in general at international level and in particular within the Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, research centres, and institutes. The magazine also presents insight into the opportunities offered, the projects, activities, and results already achieved, and the strategies and prospects for the development of the ACC and African Studies.

■ *Discours, littérature et éducation: Dangers, défis et opportunités en temps de crise*, by Féridjou Emilie Georgette Sanou/Ouattara.

This book follows from a panel discussion held in 2021, which brought together lecturers, researchers, journalists, communicators, and students on communication in times of health and security crises. Addressing the issue from the angles of linguistics, translation, literature, and pedagogy, the volume consists of ten contributions.



Text ZINZISA SIXABA

**There are four broad activity-categories that characterised 2023 for the University of Lagos African Cluster Centre (UNILAG-ACC); first, it remained a hub for Cluster and UNILAG-ACC activities; second, it created opportunities to collaborate with researchers and institutions across the globe; third, it showcased research findings. Finally, the UNILAG-ACC continued the project of reconfiguring African Studies through research.**

As a hub for Cluster and UNILAG-ACC activities, the UNILAG-ACC started the year 2023 by hosting the Cluster Digital Solutions Team from 18 to 26 January 2023. In attendance were team members from Germany, South Africa, Kenya, and Burkina Faso. UNILAG-ACC also hosted the Cluster's Knowledge Lab on 4 May 2023. Kayode Soremekun delivered a lecture entitled *Eclectic Reflections on Spaces as Demonstrated in the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Oil Industry: Lessons from South Africa*.

Creating opportunities to collaborate with researchers and institutions across the globe, the Centre welcomed postdoctoral Fellows Elizabeth Murey from Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya (8 March till 6 September 2023) and Helen Ugah from Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo, Nigeria (June 2023 till November 2023).

While collaborating with other institutions, the Centre welcomed visitors from far and wide. In November,

representatives from Yale University, including Professor of English and Chair of the African Studies Council, Cajetan Iheka, in the company of Cristin Siebert, Program Director, and Rebecca Cramer, Associate Director and Program Manager, International Development visited UNILAG-ACC on 2 November 2023. Also, scholars from various universities in Africa, Europe, and North America visited

### ACC Lagos: University of Lagos, Nigeria

UNILAG-ACC during the Afrobeats workshop themed Afrobeats: Digital Encounters and the Global Mainstreaming of African Popular Music on 12 September 2023.

In 2023, Principal Investigators (PI) at UNILAG-ACC were awarded fellowships to other institutions. Anthony Okeregbe and Feyi Ademola-Adeoye were awarded visiting fellowships at Moi University African Cluster Centre in Eldoret, Kenya. Moses Yakubu was awarded a fellowship at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies at the University of Bayreuth, and Kayode Eesuola was at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo as a PI on the Cluster mobility programme.

In showcasing the findings of research, UNILAG-ACC continued its ongoing tradition of hosting its monthly UNILAG-ACC lecture series which featured contributions from its PIs as well as UNILAG-ACC visiting Fellows.

Visiting Fellows who took part in the Lecture series included:

■ Mohamed Saliou Camara, a Carnegie Fellow from Howard University, USA delivered a lecture entitled *The Imperative to Reform US-African Relations*.

■ Paul Ugor, a Carnegie Fellow from the University of Waterloo, Canada gave a lecture entitled *Femi Odugbemi's 'Unmasked': The Failed State and Post-Colonial Necropolitics in Nigeria*.

■ Magret Jongore from the Bindura University Of Science Education, Zimbabwe delivered a lecture on *The Nexus between Onomastics and Critical Discourse Approach: An Analysis of Selected Toponyms in Lagos, Nigeria*.

■ Paul Opondo from Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya lectured on *Sociocultural Perspective to Individual Name Change and (Re)Construction of Identity in Lagos*.

To further showcase research findings, the ACC hosted several workshops in 2023 which produced invaluable and robust engagements with research data. One such workshop was organised by Taibat Lawanson and Abisoye Eleshin on 18 April 2023 entitled Growing up in an African City which featured a keynote address from Pastor Goodman Akinlabi of The Elevation Church, Pistis Foundation, Lagos. Another workshop was a Migration Across West African Cities stakeholders workshop on 17 August 2023 which was hosted by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in collaboration with



On 16th November, 2023, Ayodele Yusuff and Abisoye Eleshin invited primary school students to the premiere of the Folktales Animation Project.

Fl.t.r: Bernard Sorre, Elizabeth Murey and Muiyiwa Falaiye, Patrick Oloko and Kayode Eesuola (Unilag-ACC) participated at the Moi-ACC conference which took place in Eldoret, Kenya from 23rd to 24th November, 2023.



UNILAG-ACC and led by PIs Lawanson, Eesuola, and Eleshin.

Finally, the UNILAG-ACC continued the project to reconfigure African Studies through research by recognising the need to mentor and form young researchers; accordingly, two years after successfully hosting the first UNILAG-ACC Graduate Conference in 2021, the Centre hosted its second Graduate Conference in African Studies from 19 - 22 September 2023. The theme for 2023 was Developing Theories Within the African Studies Research Space. The event featured a keynote address provided by Chielozona Eze from Carleton College, USA. UNILAG-ACC welcomed 20 PhD students from across Nigeria as attendees and sponsored their transportation to the conference and accommodation.

To further showcase research findings, the ACC hosted several workshops in 2023 which produced invaluable and robust engagements with research data. One such workshop was organised by Taibat Lawanson and Abisoye Eleshin on 18 April 2023 entitled Growing up in an African City which featured a keynote address from Pastor Goodman Akinlabi of The Elevation Church, Pistis Foundation, Lagos. Another workshop was a Migration



GDO and Early Career Scholars: (fl.t.r) the Head administration, Gender and Diversity, Naidi Zedomi, Elizabeth Murey (Postdoctoral Fellow), Bolatito Kolawole (Unilag-ACC Ph.D. Candidate), Helen Ugah (Postdoctoral Fellow), Research affiliates of the Institute; Sophia Ertlmaier from University of Bayreuth, Germany, and Diekara Oloruntoba-Oju from Harvard University, USA.

The Digital Solutions team visited UNILAG-ACC from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 and were hosted by the Head of IT, UNILAG-ACC, Bilqis Alayaki



Across West African Cities stakeholders workshop on 17 August 2023 which was hosted by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in collaboration with UNILAG-ACC and led by PIs Lawanson, Eesuola, and Eleshin.

Finally, the UNILAG-ACC continued the project to reconfigure African Studies through research by recognising the need to mentor and form young researchers; accordingly, two years after successfully hosting the first UNILAG-ACC Graduate Conference in 2021, the Centre hosted its second Graduate Conference in African Studies from 19-22 September 2023. The theme for 2023 was *Developing Theories Within the African Studies Research Space*. The event featured a keynote address provided by Chielozona Eze from Carleton College, USA. UNILAG-ACC welcomed 20 PhD students from across Nigeria as attendees and sponsored their transportation to the conference and accommodation.

To further engage with the project of reconfiguring African Studies, the year brought a series of firsts for UNILAG-ACC. For instance, Deji Akinpelu, a documentary film maker, was awarded the first Artist in Residence Fellowship (1 April-31 May 2023). The Centre also screened the premiere and exhibition of the *Urban Corridor Documentary*:

*Roots and Route* hosted by Lawanson and Eleshin from 3-10 October 2023. The year also saw the premiere screening of the *Folktales Animation Project* hosted by Ayodele Yusuff and Eleshin on 16 November 2023.

Beyond collaborating with researchers and institutions, in 2023, UNILAG-ACC had three ongoing short-term projects funded by the Cluster:

■ *Locating the Albatross in Women Political Participation in Sub-Saharan Africa by Feyi Ademola-Adeoye*

■ *Municipal Road Construction in Kenya and Nigeria: Investigating the Politics of Infrastructure Development* by Moses Yakubu and Feyi Ademola-Adeoye

■ *Mobilities Across West African Corridors* by Taibat Lawanson and Abisoye Eleshin

■ *UNILAG-ACC also had one long-term project funded by the Cluster:*

■ *The Socio-political Thoughts of Òrùnmìlà in the Home and Diaspora Practices of Ifá* by Kayode Eesuola and Muiyiwa Falaiye.

UNILAG-ACC looks forward to building on its momentum and providing further opportunities for scholarly engagement and collaboration in 2024. 🌍



Field Trip to Burkina Faso for the Ethics Dumping project: (fl.t.r) Yacouba Banhoro (Ouagadougou-ACC), Ugachi Eleanya (Research assistant from Nigeria), Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko (Co-PI on the project), Bamogo (Research Assistant from Ouagadougou-ACC)

## ACC Moi Moi University

Text PETER SIMATEI

2023 was another excellent year at Moi University African Cluster Centre (Moi-ACC), Eldoret, Kenya. The productivity expected from the now long-established, structured, regular Centre activities was more significant than in previous years.



Delegates of the Moi Inaugural Conference

### Research Projects

The following Africa Multiple-funded projects continued through 2023:

Project Title	Project Director(s)	Duration
<i>Indigenous Intelligence and Livelihoods</i>	Mosol Kandagor	24 months
<i>Pots, Fire, and Gourds: A (Re)presentation of Cultural Knowledge Systems</i>	Justine Sikuku	24 months
<i>Ethics and Legitimacies in Modification of Moving Material Cultures in North Rift, Kenya</i>	Joram Kareithi	24 months
<i>Beyond the Digital Return: "New Heritage(s)," Sustainability, and the Decolonisation of Music Archives in South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana</i>	Lee Watkins Tom Mboya Markus Coester	48 months
<i>Islamic Popular Culture and Public Performance Practices</i>	Hassan J. Ndzovu	48 months

In addition, the following Centre-funded projects were undertaken in 2023:

Project Title	Project Director(s)	Duration
<i>Mobility and Relational Connectivities' Impacts on Access and Participation in Urban Agriculture Among Residents of Informal Settlements in Eldoret Town</i>	Fredrick Okaka	Three months
<i>Ageing and Leisure: Perceptions, Opportunities, and Challenges in the Leisure Space in Kenya</i>	Jamin Masinde	Three months
<i>Indigenous Food Security Initiatives among the Nandi, Keiyo, and Marakwet of Kenya</i>	Prisca Tanui Too	Three months
<i>The Hybridised Bukusu Greeting for Social-political Control</i>	Simon Nganga	Three months
<i>Commodification of Traditional Medicinal and Knowledge Practices Among the Maasai, Marakwet, and Nandi Communities in Kenya</i>	Daniel Kipkorir	Three months

### Conference and Seminars

From 23–24 November 2023, Moi-ACC hosted the inaugural Moi University International Conference on African Studies. Scholars from at least sixteen universities participated in this event whose theme was Reflecting (on) Africa: Positionalities, Practices, and Products, and whose objective was “to vigorously explore the epistemological and political underpinnings and implications of how Africa's peoples, histories, and cultures have historically been (re)presented and studied.” Given that most of these scholars are African Africanists based in African universities, most of the discussions were about African Studies in Africa – the histories, the practices, and, particularly, the issues. Projects and proposals for practices of (re)presenting and studying Africa according to ideas of justice and respect that have currency in the 21st century – like the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence – were critically reflected on.

The now emblematic Africa Colloquium Seminar Series continued over 2023, though with a reduced number of seminars:

07.03.2023	Film Studies in an Interdisciplinary Era: Reflections on Theory and Method	Addamms Mututa, University of Nairobi
21.03.2023	Linguistic and Cultural Artifacts as Vehicles of Cultural Epistemology: A Study of Pots, Fire, and Gourds among the Yoruba	Feyi Ademola-Adeoye, University of Lagos
18.04.2023	Oral Literature, Gender, and Ideology: The Image of the Woman in Kamba Circumcision Songs	Naomi Nzilani Musembi, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, University of Science and Technology
12.05.2023	Anthem for Africa	Timothy Wangusa, Kampala
25.05.2023	Underdetermination of Rationality in Morality and Politics, and the Necessity of Virtues	Luke Okunya Odiemo, University of Nairobi
27.06.2023	Gender-based Violence in Primary School: Perspectives from Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Jamaica	Mary Akinyi Otieno, Kenyatta University
01.08.2023	Finding Voice in African Studies	Lydia Waithira Muthuma, The Technical University of Kenya
26.10.2023	Translations and Epistemic (In)Justice: An Investigation of Two Studies on Philosophic Sagacity	Anthony Okeregbe, University of Lagos
26.10.2023	An Anthropologico-Linguistic Analysis of Perceptions of Gender and Patriarchy in Selected Yoruba and Kalenjin Proverbs	Feyi Ademola-Adeoye, University of Lagos

### Fellowships

The following researchers from the University of Lagos undertook a three-month fellowship at Moi-ACC in 2023: Feyi Ademola-Adeoye, working on the project Exploring Gender and (non) Patriarchy in Selected Nigerian (Yoruba) and Kenyan (Kalenjin) Proverbs and Anthony Okeregbe working on the project Translations and Epistemic (In)Justice: A Comparative Analysis of Two Studies on Philosophic Sagacity.

Over the same period, the following Moi University based researchers were out on fellowship to other Africa Multiple centres: Hassan J. Ndzovu was at Rhodes University, South Africa, to complete his project themed Feminization of Learning Institutions and Religious Activities: Reflections from Female Muslim Scholars in Kenya while Paul Abiero Opondo spent time at the University of Lagos to work on his project titled The Influence of Sovereignty and Hegemonic Self-interest on Regional Economic Integration in Africa: A Comparative Study of the Achievements and Challenges of EAC and ECOWAS.

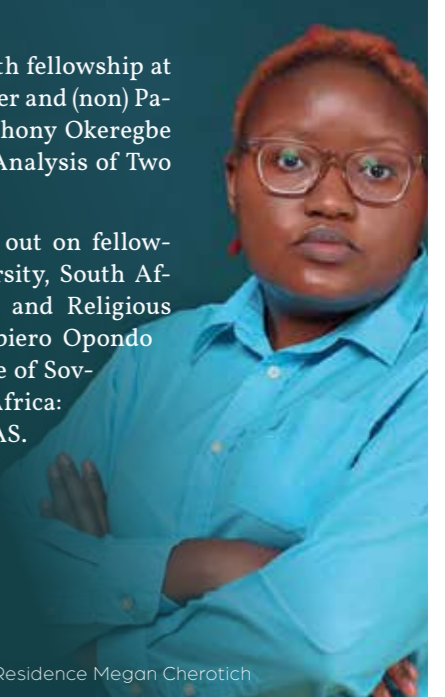
Our 2023 Artist in Residence was Migan Cherotich Kibet, who worked on and produced a documentary film with the title Comedy on Canvas.

### Early Career Scholars

Over 2023, the following individuals benefited from the Early Career Scholars programs of the Africa Multiple Cluster Of Excellence:

Name	Host Centre	Research Project
Elizabeth Murey	University of Lagos, Nigeria	Sustainable Waste Management Practices in Urban Communities: Insights from Lagos, Nigeria and Eldoret, Kenya

Name	PhD Program	Sponsoring Project
Mohammed Ndaro	Islamic Religious Education	Islamic Popular Culture and Public Performance Practices
Sumaiya Yunus Mwamzandi	Kiswahili Studies	Islamic Popular Culture and Public Performance Practices
Tabitha Osoro	Education Communication and Technology	Beyond the Digital Return: "New Heritage(s)", Sustainability, and the Decolonisation of Music Archives in South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana



Artist in Residence Megan Cherotich

**Publications:** The list below captures most of the publication output of the research work undertaken in Moi-ACC in 2023.

Author	Publication Title
Patrick Oloko, Michaela Ott, Peter Simatei, and Clarissa Vierke (Eds)	Decolonial Aesthetics II: Modes of Relating. Stuttgart: JB Metzler, 2023
Simatei, Peter	"East African Asian literature and the emergence of Diasporic Aesthetics." In Oloko, Patrick, Michaela Ott, Peter Simatei, and Clarissa Vierke (Eds) Decolonial Aesthetics II: Modes of Relating. Stuttgart: JB Metzler, 2023
Susan Arndt, Banhoro Yacouba, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, Peter Simatei (Eds)	COVID-19 in Africa: Vol 2: Governance and Containment. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
Susan Arndt, Banhoro Yacouba, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, and Peter Simatei (Eds)	COVID-19 in Africa: Vol 1: Societal and Economic Implications. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023
Peter Simatei	"Populism and its Performance in Kenya." In Borges, Jamile, Fábio Baqueiro Figueiredo, Patricia Godinho Gomes (Eds.) A New Age of Extremes? Anti-Political Politics and Identity in the early 21st Century. Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth African Studies Online (10), 2023
Christopher Odhiambo Joseph	"Aesthetics of Participation in Film for Community Development: Watatu." In Oloko, Patrick, Michaela Ott, Peter Simatei, Clarissa Vierke (Eds) Decolonial Aesthetics II: Modes of Relating. Stuttgart: JB Metzler, 2023: 119-124.
Tom Michael Mboya	"The Kenyan Mwananchi and the National Language: Kiswahili and 'Pili Mswahili' by Moreno Batamba et L'Orchestre Moja One." Swahili Forum, Vol. 30 (2023): 183-195.
Kenneth Kaunda Oluoch†	"East African Community Partner States' Response to Truckers as High-Risk Group in the Context of COVID-19." In Arndt, Susan, Banhoro Yacouba, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, and Peter Simatei (Eds) COVID-19 in Africa: Vol 2: Governance and Containment. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
Hassan J. Ndzovu	Ed. Journal for Islamic Studies, Volume 41 (2023), No. 1, ISSN 2957-9163 (Online)
Hassan J. Ndzovu	"Editorial: Mediated and Mediatisation of Religious Knowledge in Africa." Journal for Islamic Studies, Volume 41 (2023), Number 1, 4pp, ISSN 2957-9163 (Online)
Hassan J. Ndzovu	"The Madrassa System and the Islamic-Integrated Schools: Competing Spaces for Learning and the Ambivalent Relations with Secular Education in Kenya." Journal for Islamic Studies, Volume 41 (2023), Number 1, 19pp, ISSN 2957-9163 (Online)
Paul Abiero Opondo	"Reflections on the African Futures of Regional Integration and Challenges to the Marginalised Small-scale Traders Across the Borders of the Partner States of the East African Community (EAC)." Regions, Issue 16 (2023). DOI reference: 10.1080/13673882.2023.00001013
Bramwel Matui	"The Making of Marginal Multilateralism During COVID-19 Response among EAC States: Perspectives from Discursive Institutionalism." In Susan Arndt, Banhoro Yacouba, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, Peter Simatei (Eds) COVID-19 in Africa: Vol 2: Governance and Containment. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
Mohamed Suleiman Mraja	"Sheikh Mohamed Badamana and Radio-Based Fatwas (Legal Verdicts) as a Learning Tradition in Kenya." Journal for Islamic Studies, Volume 41 (2023), Number 1, 18pp, ISSN 2957-9163 (Online)
Suleiman Athuman Chembea	"Mediatized Spirituality: Qasidah and Nashid for Alternative Narratives and Religious Economy in the East African Coast." Journal for Islamic Studies, Volume 41, Number 1, 18pp, ISSN 2957-9163 (Online)

# BIGSAS Trajectories

The alumni of BIGSAS are found in nearly every part of the world and engage diligently in a wide spectrum of academic and non-academic endeavours. Like in previous editions, we caught up with another BIGSAS alumna to shed light on her time at BIGSAS and the impact that the institution had on her career path and intellectual vision.

Text **SILKE OLDENBURG**

## Between Passion and Perseverance

In 2008, I had the incredible opportunity to join the very first cohort of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS). Even though I spent much of that initial year conducting ethnographic research in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the vibrant spirit of BIGSAS was a constant source of inspiration. Whether in Bayreuth or in the field, I felt deeply connected to the school's emerging community.

Paradoxically, my journey to Bayreuth's renowned African Studies programme followed a prize-winning MA thesis on internally displaced youth in Colombia. Coming from a background of political anthropology and peace and conflict studies, I was deeply interested in 'ordinary youth', exploring why young people in contexts shaped by protracted conflict do not choose to take up arms. Building on this interest, I shifted my focus to Africa for my PhD research, dedicating my studies to exploring youth and their everyday life within war-torn Eastern DRC. There, I paid attention to hustling, love, and conviviality in order to analyse how young people experience and make sense of uncertain contexts.

The ability to conduct research and pursue my passion independently allowed me to grow intellectually and gain valuable personal experience. BIGSAS's exceptional academic environment and its supportive network were instrumental in shaping my work. For example, as a young female and white PhD researcher, I often found myself relating to the young people I studied, as we were all navigating our respective searches for meaning and direction. This awareness made me constantly mindful of my own positionality and

privileges, especially during pivotal moments like the siege of the city of Goma, DRC in 2008.

Balancing life and research between a war-torn city and peaceful Bayreuth posed challenges, but the supportive discussions with peers and faculty at BIGSAS provided invaluable guidance. The vibrant scholarly community at



Silke Oldenburg

BIGSAS not only fostered my academic development but also offered a nurturing space for personal growth, making it an indispensable part of my PhD experience.

In particular, I appreciated BIGSAS's support to participate in international conferences and summer schools. These experiences not only connected me with fellow scholars exploring similar questions, but also nurtured enduring academic networks and friendships that continue to thrive. Additionally, the opportunity to organise panels

and workshops in Bayreuth not only expanded my professional network but also facilitated engaging discussions that occasionally transitioned from academic settings like campus or Iwalewaha to more local Franconian venues such as Auf der Theta or Manns Bräu. It offered a pleasant balance of intellectual exchange and conviviality.

Since my days at BIGSAS, I have been awarded several prestigious fellowships at the Universities of Cartagena, Colombia, University of Colorado at Boulder and Columbia University, USA, the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa at the University of Ghana, and a Landhaus Fellowship at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich. I have held positions at the University of Basel, Switzerland and I am currently part of the transdisciplinary research project *The Future of Humanitarian Design* at the Geneva Graduate Institute (2023-2027), which explores the complex facets of socio-political, technological, and aesthetic dimensions of humanitarian design in Colombia and the DRC.

In addition to my academic pursuits, I have gained practical experience, such as consulting for UNICEF during the Ebola outbreak in the Eastern DRC and working with various international and non-governmental organisations in the field of youth and conflict. I expanded my communication skills by producing several reports and features on everyday life in Eastern DRC for SRF 2, the Swiss national radio. It was also an honour to serve in the jury of the BIGSAS Journalist Award 2019.

I am very much looking forward to the 2024 edition of the Association for African Studies in Germany e.V. (VAD) conference in Bayreuth where I will convene with colleagues a panel on *Southern Knowledges: Re/Centring Encounters Between Africa and Latin America* and return to my alma mater. 🌍



Left to right:  
 First row: Büsra Üner, Darja Wolfmeier, Sophia Ertlmaier, Malaika Lesego Samora Mahlatsi  
 Second row: Issa Tamou, Edidiang Charles Ibanga, Maryanne Wambui Wamahiu, Younsa Sbaïhi  
 not depicted: Abdallah Ounour Hassan, Julio Simões, Josephine Baako-Amponsah, Juliet Gudhlanga, Samba Aclassato, Julião Alar  
 The depicted persons own the rights to their own image.

# BIGSAS Status Quo 2023

Text MICHELLE HEESE

**This status quo provides an overview of the most important facts, figures, and developments of the year 2023 for the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS)**

### Four New BIGSAS Members

Four new faculty members joined the institution in 2023. Andrew Harvey (African Languages and the Construction of Knowledge), Alena Rettová (African and Afrophone Philosophies), Jia Hui Lee (Science and Technology Studies of the Global South), and Melina Cassandra Kalfelis (Social and Cultural Anthropology) increase the number of African Studies experts to a total of 37 BIGSAS members from over 30 disciplines.

### Fourteen New Doctoral Candidates from Thirteen Countries

In 2023, BIGSAS welcomed 14 new Junior Fellows from all over the world. After successfully applying for the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) Graduate School Scholarship Programme (GSSP) fund-

ing line again, we were granted four full-time, four-year scholarships to be given out over the course of two years. We are pleased that therefore out of the 14 new doctoral candidates, we were able to include two new DAAD GSSP holders into the institution as well.

BIGSAS takes great pride in the diversity of its doctoral community. The fourteen new arrivals come from thirteen different countries: Germany, Morocco, Turkey, Mozambique, Nigeria, Canada, South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Benin, Brazil, and Sudan, and research on nearly as many different disciplines within the graduate school.

### Status Quo – Doctoral Students

By the end of 2023, the total number of Junior Fellows at BIGSAS had reached 88, demonstrating further growth from last year's total of 81. Those 88 doctoral students represent a total of 34 different countries. The geographic distribution within these 34 countries remains unchanged from previous years, with a majority of 47 Junior Fellows coming from 22 coun-

tries within the African continent. We have 35 European (seven countries), three Asian (three countries), and three American (two countries) representatives as well. Regarding the gender composition, 52 of the total 88 doctoral students are women, 35 men, and 1 non-binary, which underlines the institutional effort to support women in academia (also supported via the GSSP call for women from the African continent).

In the course of the year, seven Junior Fellows successfully defended their PhD theses: Catheline Bosibori Nyabwengi (*A History of Women Anti-State Fighters in Kenya, 1952–2019*), Mbaye Seye (*Music and Narration in Moussa Sène Absas Films*), Claudia Serwah Prempeh (*Powering Ghana? "Dumsor", a Study of Electricity and its Absence*), Taha El Hadari (*Research Synthesis: A Meta-Analysis and Meta-Ethnography of Sociolinguistic Research in Morocco*), Albert Irambeshya (*Social Protection for Elderly People in the Context of Social Changes in Rwanda*), Oladapo Opeyemi Ajayi (*Fújì Music and Everyday Life in the Contemporary Urban Yorùbá Space*), Coffi Fidèle Ballo Guèdè (*«Ni riche(s) ni pauvre(s)»: une identité de classe moyenne au Bénin?*). Two of these dissertations were cotutelle dissertation projects with the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin, and Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco.

### Research Grant for Ngozi Edeagu

Ngozi Edeagu received the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA) Research Grant for her paper on *'The Democracy of the Stomach': Re-Examining National Security through Soldier Complaints (1944–1960)*, which was presented at the ASMEA Conference from 4 to 6 November 2023 in Washington, D.C., USA.

### Status Quo – BIGSAS Alumni Network

The BIGSAS alumni network is stead-

ily growing, and BIGSAS attaches great importance to the continuing involvement of its alumni. Since its foundation in 2007, 186 students have successfully completed their doctorates within the institution, with many publishing their dissertations with well-known publishers. Their know-how and professional experience are of great value to the current doctoral students at BIGSAS, and the institution itself. With their diverse expertise and different professional experiences, the alumni are an integral part of our multidisciplinary mentoring approach, where the alumni act as associate members of BIGSAS and mentors for the Junior Fellows. They also take part in regular (digital) exchanges in working groups, workshops, seminars, or colloquia, or support the institution in the organisation and implementation of major events, such as the BIGSAS Journalist Award, which has been presented regularly since 2011. Recurring national and international alumni conferences round off the integration and continuous interaction.

The careers of BIGSAS alumni are as diverse as their personal backgrounds and research interests. While some alumni have remained in Bayreuth, the majority have opted for a career in their countries of origin. Many continue to dedicate themselves to university work as post-docs, academic teaching staff, and professors, and are now an integral part of their respective academic institutions. Others pursue their passion for research in think tanks, private research centres, and international research organisations, or as executives and managers in the private sector. Despite the physical distance, the alumni have always maintained their close connection to their alma mater and support BIGSAS in many ways.

### Three Dissertation Prizes by the German Society for Social and Cultural Anthropology (DGSKA)

Three of the BIGSAS alumni have received the prestigious dissertation prize by the German Society for Social and Cultural Anthropology (DGSKA). Valerie Nur (*Craft as Social Practice: An Ethnological Study of the Craft Practices of the Endogamous Artisan Group of the In-*

*adan des Air in Niger*) was awarded the first prize, and Joh Sarre (*'Some call it Slum, we call it Home!' - Negotiations of Belonging among the Nubian Inhabitants of Kibera, Kenya*) and Carsten Mildner (*Deaf-Deaf-Different. Ambiguities of Being Deaf in Benin*) share the second prize between them.

### Workshops, Events, and Awards

Consistent with its goal to provide excellent conditions for a successful doctorate, BIGSAS offered different seminars, training possibilities, and mini workshops as well as language classes for its Junior Fellows in the course of the year 2023. The doctoral candidates benefited from expert academic input on a range of academic topics, know-how, and tools, like the *PhotoVoice as a Practice of Representation and Social Solidarity* workshop from Shose Kessi (University of Cape Town) or the lectures *Biodocs: The Politics of Greatness* by Alexie Tcheuyap (University of Toronto), and *In Defense of Sovereignty: When History is Stranded Between Law and Fact* by Theodoros Rakopoulos (University of Oslo).

In addition, there were various *BIGSAS Dean Meets Junior Fellows* meetups and the doctoral students were invited again to present their scientific work at official BIGSAS colloquia throughout the year. These colloquia serve as a unique platform for all Junior Fellows and senior researchers to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue

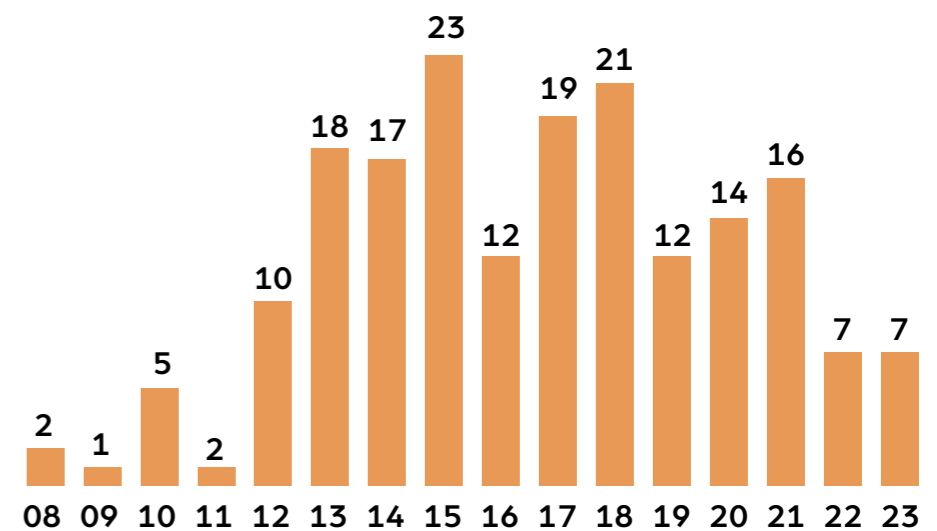


Countries of Origin of the BIGSAS Alumni based on Continents

of mutual benefit. BIGSAS also continued their Work in Progress Colloquium where Junior Fellows have the opportunity to discuss their current work and research development in a more open and informal way with their peers.

BIGSAS moreover had several *BIGSAS Meets* events during the course of the year, giving a detailed introduction about the institution and its Junior Fellows to EIMAS students, Cluster Fellows, and other interested parties. And some of the student representatives met Minister Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, at Iwalewahaus.

BIGSAS Alumni 2008–2023



# 2023 Year In Review:

## A Report by the Junior Research Group African Knowledges and the History Public\*ation

The Junior Research Group (JRG) African Knowledges and the History Public\*ation had a busy but rewarding year in 2023. The JRG's leader Cassandra Mark-Thiesen and her team reflect on some highlights of the year.

Individually and collectively, the JRG advanced in research and publications, and contributed to a number of Cluster-related academic and outreach activities, whether as moderators, organisers, and speakers on panels, or in other ways in 2023. The JRG was also delighted to welcome the band Gaya Verse, who did *Lively Up* a collaborative performance lecture, as well as the as well as the party at the fourth annual Cluster conference. Below are just two highlights from our JRG's activities. The first was a public workshop held at the University of Bayreuth in January where heritage in the African context was discussed at a more social or "lived" level, whereas it is frequently compounded with tourism and diplomacy. The workshop foregrounded growing concerns with a desire for cultural independence, the ambition to better preserve cultural goods from Africa, as well as the formation and co-existence of African identities in their multiplicity. The workshop asked to what extent the search for common ground in global and national cultural heritage undermined (or excluded) plurality and diverse cultures, including their reflections on social and cultural life? Also, to what extent does the focus on conserving ever-smaller units of cultural inheritance stand in the way of developing collectivities that can withstand widespread hardship and injustices?

The second event was a team meeting and workshop held at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados in February, centring heritage and history shaped by the transatlantic slave trade and linked to the development and survival of

the long-independent West African state of Liberia. To deepen thinking on the Liberian past and present, the JRG brought together members of the university and local museologists with scholars from the University of Liberia and the University of Arkansas to collectively revisit the historical linkages between Liberia and Barbados: A connection that is increasingly capturing of people on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2024, Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Mottley spoke of a novel "Back to Barbados" movement from Liberia. In front of Parliament, she celebrated related opportunities for local Bajans to reconnect with their Liberian roots, which led to the establishment of new diplomatic relationships and the forging of a tourism agreement. The JRG was happy to have contributed in a small way to this two-way process of rediscovery.

Cassandra Mark-Thiesen



Photo left and right: Gaya Verse at the party of the Cluster Conference 2023



has worked on local perspectives on slavery heritage in Ghana and tourism management at large management and marketing, and Sabelo Mcinziba (South Africa) of the University of Cape Town (South Africa), a cultural entrepreneur and researcher who later joined the Cluster as an artist Fellow). The audience enjoyed a a roundtable discussion, an online panel, and two PhD-research presentations with input by scholars from international institutions, the ACCs, the Africa Multiple Cluster, and the University of Bayreuth.

Through these diverse input, novel inquiries arose concerning power dynamics, ownership structures, varied interpretive methods – both historical and contemporary – heritage management practices, tourism, archival strategies, and alternative multi-media preservation approaches for African heritage within postcolonial, Afro-centric, and indigenous frameworks.

As a perfect interlude, on the evening of the first day of the workshop, the JRG organised an open mic poetry slam at Kulturhaus Neuneinhalb. It was a captivating fusion of artistry and expression, interwoven with music and dance. It was an unforgettable experience for all involved.

Luisa Schneider

Picture above and below:  
The JRG panel with Gaya Verse.  
Photos: Robert Götze

### The African (Digital) Heritage Workshop, January 2023

Over the span of just two days, namely from 18 to 19 January, attendees of our African (Digital) Heritage Workshop, held at Iwalewahaushaus, explored interdisciplinary questions of African heritage cultures, influenced by global forces and the transformative power of the digital revolution.

The workshop featured three keynote presentations by Emmanuel Adu-Ampong of the University of Wageningen (the Netherlands), whose research includes an investigation of the geographies of slavery heritage tourism; Aaron Yankholmes from Nottingham Trent University (UK), who



Emmanuel Adu-Ampong, Edidiong Charles Ibanga, Aaron Yankholmes, Luisa Schneider, Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Ololade Edun

### JRG Team Meeting in Barbados 2023

A warm, colourful, and lively Barbados welcomed our research group and a team of experts and consultants from 14 to 17 February, 2023. With a beautiful landscape, an array of vivid colours, warm and friendly hosts, and a rich history with historical ties to Liberia (as would later be discussed by Caree Banton from the University of Arkansas), the team meeting and workshop, which took place at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados, was an experience complete with rich intellectual and cultural exchanges. With inputs from consultants and experts such as Tanya Ansahta Garnett from the University of Liberia, Monrovia, Melanie Boehi from the University of Lausanne, and Banton, the Junior Research Group (JRG) led by Cassandra Mark-Thiesen hosted a series of exchanges over a few days.



From left to right: Caree Banton, Tanya Ansahta Garnett, Luisa Schneider, Melanie Boehi, Edidiong Charles Ibanga, and Cassandra Mark-Thiesen

From interactions with the sound archives of journalist and writer Ruth Weiss, whose archives of press photographs, correspondence, manuscripts, and press correspond with the JRG's work on the archives of the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS), to an exploration of the legacies of women's political activism in Liberia, Boehi and Garnett's presentations highlighted the validity of historical (re)collections and the imperative for plural,

more diverse and inclusive sources. While the JRG leader Mark-Thiesen shared an audiovisual collage of some of the materials from the LBS television archives, which is unlike any archive in Liberia, the PhD candidates were led through brainstorming sessions in response to the presentation of their research projects to the team.

Among several highlights of this meeting were the visit to the Barba-

dos Museum and Historical Society (BMHS) and a book presentation that, upon the request of our delighted hosts, turned into a public lecture with the students of the university's Cultural Studies faculty in attendance. Banton's book *More Auspicious Shores: Barbadian Migration to Liberia, Blackness, and the Making of an African Republic* chronicles the migration of approximately fifty large Barbadian families to Liberia in 1865. It details their mapping of another form of emancipatory movement onto the Liberian landscape, thus revealing a climactic of emancipation: the movement of freed people to and between places in complex yet interesting ways that result in the creation of a black Diasporic, multi-sited, and transnational emancipatory cartographic countryside.

We acknowledge and appreciate the input and support of the team of experts and invited guests, our hosts at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, the drivers who helped us navigate the environment, and our BMHS tour guides (including the student guides) who guided us through Barbados cultural artifacts (and our 'accidental' yet exhilarating discovery of archival records on Rihanna). The experience was indeed a memorable one!

Edidiong C. Ibanga



Public lecture by Caree Banton related to her book *More Auspicious Shores*.

## Research in turbulent times: Politics of the Unknown

*Immigration clandestine*

Text JOSCHKA PHILIPPS  
Photos AURÉLIEN GILLIER

**For the Junior Research Group Politics of the Unknown, the year 2023 was "mouvémenté" – a French term that captures a spectrum of meanings, ranging from lively and eventful to rough and turbulent.**

Featuring important field research trips by all participants, and various conferences and workshops, Junior Research Group Leader Joschka Philipps and doctoral students Saïkou Oumar Sagnane and Kingsley Jima spent relatively lit-

tle time in Bayreuth. Some of the research projects, notably those studying violent conflict, were confronted with their phenomena more directly than expected. Sékou Oumar Thiam, whose artworks accompany the text, was met with existential insecurities after being evicted from the place where he has lived and worked since 2016. Friends helped him build a new space, only for it to be vandalised a few months later. "Nothing is certain around here," Thiam commented laconically.

**Movements, Conferences, Activities**  
In January 2023, doctoral students

Jima and Sagnane presented their respective research at the international colloquium *Understanding and Governing Uncertainty in Crisis Contexts* at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, while JRG leader Philipps joined the Cluster conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on *Spatialities and Innovations in Francophone West Africa* in March. His presentation, together with his doctoral student Paala Toubga, compared political dynamics that transgress conventional imaginations of political spaces, such as the left-right spectrum in Germany or the top vs. bottom metaphor in

Burkina Faso. Philipps also presented the *Politics of the Unknown* project at the Bavarian Peace and Conflict Research Networking Workshop at the University of Augsburg in February, and held workshop and conference talks in Accra, Ghana, and La Plata, Argentina, for the Global Qualitative Sociology Network (February and November), the Bordeaux Summer School (June), in the Social Movements Workshop in Bayreuth (online with Armel Zerbo, in November), and the Sahel Symposium in Uppsala, Sweden (December). All three JRG members took part in the European Summer School for the Anthropology of Development and Social Dynamics in Bayreuth in May 2023, led by Andrea Behrends.

At the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Cologne in May and June, Philipps organised a panel with Layla Bamaara on movements (both in terms of migration and political protest) that have interlinked sub-Saharan and North Africa, to critically interrogate their continued distinction and dissociation between the regions. Born out of a co-publication project on youth and mobilisation, the panel had been planned as a discussion on ignored trans-Saharan connections. Yet, in February 2023, Tunisian President Kais Saïed's racist remarks about "hordes of irregular migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa" that he alleged were part of a conspiracy to "change the demographic make-up" and turn Tunisia into "just another African country that doesn't belong to the Arab and Islamic nations anymore" – and the subsequent attacks on black migrants in Tunisia – served as a tragic reminder of the fissures and tensions that continue to run deep, and that were equally discussed during the panel. The Sudan Roundtable in May revolved around disturbing circumstances as well. Titled *Shattered Hope? Sudan Four Years after the Revolution*, it sought to decipher the war that had broken out five weeks earlier. Chaired by Philipps, it featured Samah Khalaf Allah, Kurt Beck, Bakheit Mohammed Nur, Elshifa Mohammednour Elamin, and Rüdiger Seesemann as contributors to reflect on the violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Among the members of the *Politics of*



Portrait de Oumar Sékou Thiam

the *Unknown* team, it was especially Sagnane who also tried to inquire into feasible responses to crises. As part of his consultancy for the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), he presented his report on Guinea-Conakry at a conference on *Social Cohesion Amidst the Global Polycrisis* in Bonn. The goal was to understand social cohesion at different geographical scales, in different socio-political contexts, and on the basis of crisis/conflict situations and polarisation issues. Sagnane also conducted an interview with Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, which he is currently turning into a publication. It looks at Ndlovu-Gatsheni's personal, intellectual, and epistemological biography, and how his thinking can be deployed as a tool for knowledge, learning, and enunciation. In September, Sagnane also organised a workshop on the contribution of Guinean universities to the political transition during his fieldwork in Conakry. The aim of this workshop was to stimulate reflection within the Guinean social sciences around their role in interpreting and addressing disruptive events, particularly in relation to the unexpected Guinean regime change that occurred on 5 September 2021.

#### Publications on Conspiracies, Knowledges, and Uncertainties

Based on works carried out in the

previous years, 2023 saw several publications and co-publications of the JRG team members coming out. The open access edited volume *Covid Conspiracy Theories in Global Perspective* (Routledge) features co-publications by Philipps with linguist Oumarou Boukari ('*Complôôôt? Theorizing about Covid-19 Conspiracies in Côte d'Ivoire*) and with doctoral student Sagnane (*A Disease of the Rich and a Disease of the Poor. Comparing Rumours about the Coronavirus and Ebola in Guinea*). Based on a three-year transcontinental project on methods and theory building in the social sciences, Philipps and Sagnane co-published the article *Ideas in Exchange: Reflections on a Project of Transcontinental Learning*, together with a team of professors, lecturers, and MA students from Mali, Guinea, and Switzerland. In the same *Journal of International Students*, Sagnane published the article *Hegemonic Knowledge and Situated Knowledge: A Conceptual and Epistemological Clarification for Researchers in Guinea*, which contributes to the debate on the reconfiguration of African Studies by addressing the circulation of (academic) knowledge in relation to the Guinean context of disruption and political change. Philipps's article, *Whose Uncertainties? Dealing with Multiple Meanings in a Transnational Biography*, takes a biographical and reflexive approach to how truth and

meaning may be thought of as inherently unstable and conjectural categories. Finally, a special issue on Guinea, edited by Vincent Foucher, Philipps, and Abdoulaye Wotem Somparé, was published by *Politique Africaine* and discussed during a workshop at the Centre International de Recherche et de Documentation (CIRD) in Conakry in October 2023.


#### Fieldwork Reflections

As part of his doctoral research project on TV journalism and news narratives on banditry, Jima embarked on two stints of fieldwork in Northern Nigeria in 2023. From February to March, i.e., during Nigeria's presidential elections, Jima observed and interviewed experts as to how political actors refer to (or choose to ignore) the issues of banditry and organised violence, and how journalists label perpetrators of violence. From November to February 2024, Jima's main fieldwork was comprised of interviews with journalists, editors, news scriptwriters, field reporters, as well as members of the Nigerian Journalists Council (NJC), and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC). In December 2023, when violent attacks claimed the lives of at least 160 people in the Bokokos Local Government Area in Nigeria's Plateau State, where Jima was doing research at the time, he was able to go and observe the situation and interview people, at least as far as it was possible with the dignity of the victims and their families in mind. How did they make sense of the tragedy? What do people think had happened? Who perpetrated the massacre, and why? The study of affected communities brought Jima face to face with an underlying, anti-official discourse that highlights the presumed communal identity of the perpetrators and identifies them as Fulani – an interpretation of banditry and terrorism that is gaining prominence across the Sahel and causes increasing intercommunal polarisation. While journalists claim that, in the interest of continued cohabitation, they prefer talking about "unknown gunmen" rather than mention the ethnic identity of the perpetrators, affected communities see the situation differently. For them, the Fulani are being protected by powerful political interest groups and the media, while the other communities

are being left alone by the state. They see the uncertainty produced by the "unknown gunmen" label as a political tool by the government to refrain from more substantial political and military action.

Sagnane conducted his ethnographic PhD research in Guinea between August 2023 and January 2024. It consisted of collecting data on the sudden regime change in Guinea on 5 September 2021, and how information circulated in the wake of an unexpected event, and since then. The data was collected in different spaces: the university, administrations, residential spaces, as well as in spaces that serve as information nodes (cafés, *grins de thé*, offices, petrol stations, etc.). One of the key concepts of the research is that of the "quest" – how people see and grasp chances for their advancement in contexts of suddenly changing environments. The concept came to Sagnane by chance. While working on his thesis, he picked up the book *Njeddo Dewal, Mère de la calamité (Njeddo Dewal, Mother of Calamity)*, a Fulani initiation tale. It turned out that this book is part of a trilogy, with each of the three books recounting an initiation tale, migration, and power. At the heart of these three stories, transcribed by Amadou Hampâté Bâ, is the logic of the quest that emerges in situations of uncertainty. In conversation with Ndlovu-Gatsheni and his concept of the 'locus of enunciation', Sagnane found the opportunity, the argument, and the necessary authority to work with Fulani initiation tales, not as a research object to be analysed on the basis of academic theories, but as a conceptual and theoretical frame of reference for analysing his empirical data.

JRG Leader Philipps left Bayreuth in September to work and teach for two semesters at the African Cluster Centre Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and undertake research for the sister project *Fluid Ontologies of Contestation*, an interdisciplinary undertaking with data scientists and social scientists from Bayreuth and Ouagadougou. While the initial idea was to study social media dynamics both during the 2014 popular insurrection and in contemporary debates on decolonisation, the contemporary political situ-

ation in Burkina Faso was ultimately deemed too tense for the latter. Indeed, Philipps found himself surrounded by the same conspiracist dynamics that he had studied in the *Politics of the Unknown* project, only now these theories got into the way of being studied. The university was said to be a key site of secret service activity; some friends warned him that other friends and colleagues were associated with the National Intelligence Agency and that he ought to be careful. Professors and intellectuals avoided talking, let alone researching, about political issues. Philipps thus followed what most of his colleagues did and turned almost exclusively to social media. As the supporters of Burekinabè President Ibrahim Touré say: *Les opérations se poursuivent – opérations continue.* 



L'être humain, extérieurement connu et intérieurement inconnu –  
The human being, outwardly known and inwardly unknown



La lumière du cerveau 2 –  
The light of the brain 2



# The Junior Research Group

## Monetary and Economic Sovereignty in West Africa Compared

Text **CARLA COBURGER**  
**ISAAC ABOTEBUNO**  
**AKOLGO, KAI KODDENBROCK**

The past year has been filled with extensive interview and archive phases for all members of the Junior Research Group (JRG) on Economic and Monetary Sovereignty in West Africa, spanning locations from Lagos, Ibadan, Accra, Paris, London, and Bordeaux. Coupled with workshops on the politics of interview methods and data extraction, the JRG members have not only deepened their understanding on the persistent debt crisis across Africa, rising inflation, and the growing continental dialogue about alternatives to the Euro-American dominated global financial system, but also reflected deeply on the politics of research methodology within the field of political economy.

For a group that is focused on studying monetary systems and finance in West

Africa, these turbulent times provided an opportunity to make sense of the bigger theoretical picture of understanding West Africa's subordination within the global financialised capitalist order.

### Events

In May 2023, Kai Koddenbrock and Benjamin Braun organised the final workshop of their German Research Council (DFG)-funded research network *Politics of Money* in Naples. This marked four years of a successful international corporation between 25 scholars working on money and finance, which produced an impressive collection of publications and a thought-provoking edited volume, *Capital Claims: Power and Global Finance*.

Carla Coburger co-organised a PhD research workshop in Bayreuth on decolonial research and interview methods alongside Eileen Jahn, featuring Shose Kessi from University of Cape Town, South Africa who spoke on *PhotoVoice, as a Practice of Representation and Social*

*Solidarity*. Coburger also participated in the German debate on the Franc of the Financial Community of Africa, or the CFA Franc as a colonial currency.

Isaac Abotebuno Akolgo took part in the Alternative Economic and Monetary Systems Summer School in Vienna and Coburger attended the Complex Systems Summer School at the Santa Fe Institute, USA. Coburger was subsequently invited to be a teaching assistant to support the inaugural Global Complex System Summer School, held in hybrid form in December 2023 between South Africa and India. Furthermore, Coburger spent three months as a visiting PhD student at the Africa Cluster Centre Lagos, at the University of Lagos, Nigeria where she conducted interviews with bankers and members of the financial industry and consulted the archives in Lagos and Ibadan.

Throughout 2023, the JRG also granted a number of interviews to the media regarding its research and participated in

public debates. Akolgo, for instance, has appeared regularly as a guest expert on the South African radio station, Channel Africa, speaking on interest rates hikes, debt, and the establishment of a pan-African payments system. He also spoke with the popular A Correction: A Podcast on the 2022–2023 Ghanaian debt crisis, arguing that beyond the fixation on COVID-19-induced spending and the Russia-Ukraine war, the current wave of indebtedness is rooted in the structural dysfunction of most African economies.

### Publications

In terms of the wider theoretical debate to understand the political dynamics and proposals for enhancing economic sovereignty in West Africa, the JRG has made significant progress with these publications:

Akolgo published *Ghana's Debt Crisis and the Political Economy of Financial Dependence in Africa: History Repeating Itself?* as part of the Development and Change's 2023 Forum Issue on the post-COVID debt crisis in the Global South. He also contributed to the *Review of International Political Economy* (RIPE) 30th anniversary special issue. His paper in RIPE: *On the contradictions of Africa's Fintech Boom: Evidence from Ghana*, was an analysis of mobile money operations and financial inclusion in Ghana, as well as the policy options to improve the developmental value of digital finance. Akolgo also contributed to the global media outlet The Conversation, writing that *Mobile money in Ghana isn't all good news: customers are paying a hefty price*.

Coburger co-authored the book, *The State of Capitalism. Economy, Society, and Hegemony* (September 2023 with Verso) with her colleagues from the European Research Network for Social and Economic Policy (ERENSEP) writing collective. She also published a paper on *When Unification Creates Hierarchies or*

Comparative research not only regarding monetary policy..., 2023, Lagos, Nigeria Photo: Carla Coburger



*The Deadly Life of Currency Unions with the Journal of Law and Political Economy.*

Kai Koddenbrock spent a year as a fellow at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris, and at Les Afriques dans le Monde, Sciences Po Bordeaux, on a Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and secured a grant on economic self-determination in the Global South from the German Research Council. Next to talks and conferences he published a short analysis on German trade and investment in Africa with the Africa Policy Research Institute in Berlin, an analysis

of the Franc CFA and the turmoil in the Sahel Region and the Senegalese elections. A major outcome of his Senegal case study work as part of the Junior Research Group is forthcoming with the *Review of International Political Economy* as "Earnest Struggles: Structural transformation, government finance and recurring debt crisis in Senegal."

The research group is currently hard at work to draft the end of project comparative monograph on the earnest struggles in (post)colonial Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Guinea (with Aissata Diallo employed in the new DFG project) which we seek to finalize in 2025. 🌍



YouTube link:  
German debate on the  
Franc of the Financial  
Community of Africa



Podcast link:  
Africa Monetary Policy  
Committees Wrap



Blog post link:  
Isaac Abotebuno Akolgo  
on Ghana's Financial  
Crisis



2023 in the Junior Research Group

# Sexualities, Political Orders and Revolutions in Africa



Text SERAWIT DEBELE

2023 has been a year of exciting engagements for the Junior Research Group (JRG) "Sexualities Political Orders and Revolutions in Africa". The JRG team has been involved in various activities in Bayreuth and beyond. These activities range from participation in summer schools as well as international conferences, teaching collaboration with universities in the US and Ethiopia to outreach, such as a film screening in collaboration with Queer Bayreuth.

On the research front, the past year has been dedicated to writing draft chapters and articles, some of which have been presented by team members on different platforms such as the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), the University of Bayreuth, Berlin's Europe in the Middle East (EUME), and Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. The junior research team members Samah Khalaf Allah and Sifa Jihad Alfakir represented our JRG in Bergen Exchanges in Norway, where they participated in multiple panels and roundtables. Our presentations in all of these spaces focused on sharing work in progress (book project, dissertations and journal articles) that revolved around questions of sexual liberation in post-socialist contexts, queer subjectivities, the war in Sudan, and social movements in Africa. On the teaching side, the JRG leader Serawit Debele, has been a guest professor at Dartmouth College, USA and the Institute of Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University, focusing on Queer African Studies in the former and ethnographic research methods in the latter. At the University of Bayreuth, together with Kai Koddembrock she co-convoked a seminar on Racial Capitalism and Feminist Political Economy. The lecture series *African Feminism Past and Present* continued with the same vigour as the year before, inviting two esteemed speakers, namely Divine Fuh, Director of the Institute for Humanities Africa (HUMA) from Cape Town, South Africa, and Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah from Accra, Ghana. In his lecture titled *The Thesis of the Single Election: Disaggregating Patriarchy*, Fuh problematised patriar-

Divine Fuh, the JRG team and other members of the university community



Nana Darkwa, JRG team and other members of the university community

chy, nudging us away from a simplistic understanding of masculinities and how they operate. In her talk titled *Sex and the Politics of Pleasure*, the African feminist writer Sekyiamah drew on her ground-breaking book *The Sex Lives of African Women* to further deliberate on the various ways in which (dis)pleasure is experienced and the intersectional nature of these experiences. Both lectures were followed by insightful interventions from discussants Cassandra Mark-Thiesen and Faisal M. Garba who were in conversation with Fuh, and Naminata Diabate, Edidiong Charles Ibanga and Samah Khalaf Allah who spoke with Sekyiamah. As always, the discussants' provocations have enabled the talks to be more lively and engaging.

Our team has been active in different outreach programs as well. Together with Katharina Fink and Eylem Çamuroğlu Çiğ, we received funding from the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies which enabled us conduct various outreach activities within a postdoc working group called *Holding Space for Critical Hope*. For example, we collaborated with the local teachers' union and discussed bell hook's book *Teaching to Transgress*, we co-organised a jazz concert with Bayreuth's Steingraeber House. Sifa Jihad Alfakir, together with Doris Löhr-Broß, represented the Cluster in Leipzig, where both took part in a roundtable titled *Afrika verlassen oder bleiben (Africa – To Stay or To Go)* within the context of

the Science Festival Globe23 to debate matters related to migration. Samah Khalaf Allah spearheaded a collaboration with Queer Bayreuth. Under her leadership, the JRG participated in various activities during the Christopher Street Day week. One of the outcomes of our team's involvement is the screening of the Kenyan film *Rafiki* at Iwalewahaus, after which people from both the city and the university community discussed matters queer. We invited Isabelle Zundel, a doctoral researcher from the African Legal Studies, to share her views on legal debates in Africa and an activist from Algeria to share their work on advocacy in the MENA region. Together with colleagues Stephanie Lämmert and Yusuf Serunkuma, the group leader Debele spoke at the Westfälischer Archivtag in Hagen. There, practitioners (librarians and archivists from the region) exchanged ideas about the politics of

archives and how power plays in the process of both archiving and accessing what has been archived.

The highlight of this year's activities was the launch of our documentation work which aims to conduct a series of interviews with senior scholars at the University of Bayreuth and beyond to document the accounts of those who have played pivotal role in the consolidation of African Studies. This documentation is part of our Volkswagen Foundation funded project that focuses on African Studies in Germany through the lens of Critical Race Theory.

Our first interview, which we conducted with Professor Gerd Spittler, is published on the Cluster website and can be accessed here:



Professor Spittler in conversation with JRG group leader Serawit Debele  
Photo: Sabine Greiner

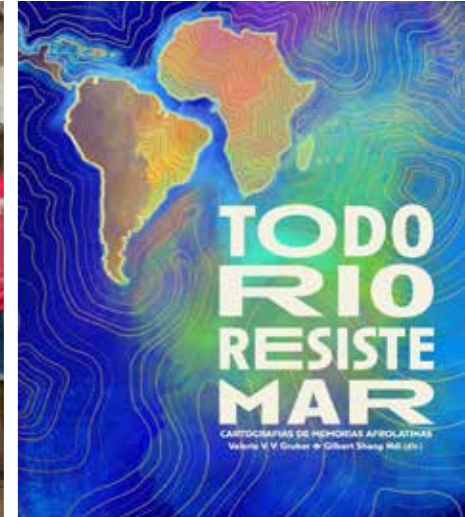
## Participatory Action Research:

# (Re)connecting Afrodiasporic Communities in Colombia and Brazil

Participants performing *Mafone – Oriki of the Voyage* in Salvador da Bahia (Brazil).  
Photo: Ana Clara Magalhães



Exchange participants in San Basilio de Palenque (Colombia), UNESCO Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.  
Photo: Gabriel Dias.



Text VALERIE V. V. GRUBER  
AND GILBERT SHANG NDI

**Funded by the Cluster of Excellence Valerie Gruber and Gilbert Shang Ndi launched a transnational and transdisciplinary research and art exchange program between Germany, Colombia and Brazil, leading to unique ways of knowledge production.**

### Bo(a)rding

We invite you to embark on a journey of academic and artistic knowledge production carried out with young Afro-descendant artists from Colombia and Brazil over the past four years. Inspired by Orlando Fals Borda's methodology of participatory action research, we designed an exchange program bringing together socio-cultural leaders and members of the Corporación Cultural Candilé from Cartagena de Indias and Rede de Protagonistas em Ação de Itapagipe (REPROTAI) from Salvador da Bahia. Through a transdisciplinary dialogue of knowledges, memories, and creative practices, this online and on-site exchange contributed to the (re)construction of narratives side-lined, overlooked, and neglected

by predominant discourses in academia, arts, politics, and civil society.

This process of knowledge co-production is part of two Cluster projects: *Moral Geographies of Re-Existence* by Eberhard Rothfuß, Livio Sansone, and Valerie Gruber, and *Black Atlantic Revisited* by Ute Fendler, Gilbert Shang Ndi, and Thierry Boudjkeu Kamgang. More specifically, the exchange was initiated by Gruber, who considered her doctoral research as an opportunity to contribute to the reconstruction of bridges between worlds separated violently through colonisation and Euro-American imperialism. After listening to leaders and members of many peripheralised communities, she began to collaborate with Ndi in mediating a co-creative process that transcends the boundaries of scientific research and generates ecologies of knowledges as elaborated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. Unlike conventional research practices in which academics use members of the community where the research is being carried out as nothing more than informants, this exchange favours a dynamic collaboration based on reciprocity, mutual learning, co-authorship, and collective benefits.

### Itinerary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exchange was carried out virtually for more than two years. Biweekly online workshops set the ground for the creation of many poems, memoirs, and video performances. Through Zoom meetings, breakout sessions, and intermittent Internet blackouts, the participants forged a telepathic and empathic community of shared dreams and anxieties, while waiting for the physical embrace. Creative self-writing and the multi-sited production of video poems turned into powerful tools of representation and transformation across territorial, social, and cultural boundaries. The participants discovered their artistic talents while relating to each other through intersections in their history, culture, ethnic-racial identification, social class, gender, religiosity, age, or place of residence.

In 2022, the exchange participants were finally able to meet each other and get to know the diverse rhythms of Cartagena de Indias and Salvador da Bahia, two UNESCO World Heritage cities of great significance in Afrodiasporic itineraries. Community mappings, excursions

to sites of memory, workshops of arts education, and the collective creation of music and dance performances allowed for a bodily immersion into struggles of resistance, re-existence, and trauma transformation in two former ports used in the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans. In the backdrop of the coloniality of power, structural violence, and persistent racism, this participatory approach to comparative

As echoed in both testimonies, it was not only about self-development and self-transformation, but also the transferability of skills learnt so as to add value to one's living space. What transpired was thus a belief that marginalised communities would not only be changed through government intervention, but above all through the determined, reflexive, and "creative" endeavours of their youth. The exchange program con-

organise a workshop with experts in ebook production in Salvador da Bahia in 2023. Published in December 2023 by Andarilha Edições, the book brings together self-writing texts with 13 video and 27 audio renditions.

Illustrated by the Colombian artist Nativa iLustra, the chapters translate Afro-Latin memories and dreams into colours, currents and contours. The

research brings to the fore the complexities of body-territories, body-archives, and body-visions that escape the trappings of a single story.

### Participants Speak

The participatory action research left lasting imprints on the participants. While the artistic and choreographic outcomes transmit the level of their professional accomplishments during the exchange, members also had the occasion to articulate more personally the implications of the program in their lives. Vin & Do Beat, rapper and sound engineer from REPROTAI, intimated during his exchange visit to Colombia that "the experience in all the workshops was very important. Each had its peculiarities, its forms, and the ways it is treated or taught. I will bring all this back to my people." On the other hand, Natalia Carmo, student of International Business Administration and dancer from Candilé, expressed her satisfaction during the exchange visit to Brazil: "I carry with me the feminine power that exists here. It is something I would like to implement in Cartagena because I know that as women, we can always give more."

tributed to the deconstruction of the coloniality of mobility, the hegemonic system that determines who moves across borders and who is obliged to remain on one place. This reality is papered over a colonial mind-set defined more concretely by the visa regimes as well as economic constraints that make it difficult for people from particular ethnic-racial groups and regions to move without being subjected to degrading border control mechanisms and racial profiling. It has contributed to keeping the African Diasporas apart and in relative disconnection from one another, despite the profound fraternity and similarities of cultural practices that otherwise connect them.

### Outcomes/Outreach

We made use of transdisciplinary platforms to divulge the diverse outcomes of the exchange in the form of public performances, video art kits, music clips, poetry slams, the documentary *MemoriAmeffricana* and the multimedia book *Todo Rio Resiste Mar*. The book project was made possible by an award obtained by the transdisciplinary network DjumbaiALA from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). This enabled us to

chapter names and motifs refer to geographical places that trigger multiple meanings, opening up spatio-temporal opportunities to recreate life projects beyond trauma. It is a dialogic cartography of healing and socio-cultural transformation, which captures the breadth and depth of lived experiences and imagined scenarios during the exchange program. 🌍

For more information on the outcomes, follow the links below:

Multimedia book:

Documentary *MemoriAmeffricana*:

Video arts:

## Major Success for the Didactics of Geography Team: Grant for Development of Teaching Materials on Africa for Bavarian High Schools

Text and photo DORIS LÖHR

**In 2023, a dedicated team within the University of Bayreuth's Didactics of Geography department achieved a significant milestone by securing third-party funding from Engagement Global, an initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).**

Led by Gabriele Schrüfer, Chair of Didactics of Geography at the University of Bayreuth, the team consisting of Carla Hermanussen, Sandra Kopschitz, Kirstin Wolf (Project manager of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Upper Franconia), and Doris Löhr (Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence) collaborated on the project *Development and Implementation of Teaching Materials on the Topic 'Africa' for Geography Classes in Bavarian High Schools* as a supplementary part of the Project Learning and Resource Platform (PLURA) project (see NAB 2022). It aims to develop theoretically comprehensive and practically applicable teaching materials for the new "LehrplanPLUS" in Bavaria, addressing the topic "Africa" for the first time in the 10th grade curriculum.

A key challenge of the project was

achieving a shift in perspective regarding Africa and overcoming colonial-influenced views. This required effective intercultural communication, particularly between the target groups for the project, including teachers, students, and multipliers, all of whom face the challenge of integrating new content and methods, especially those involving postcolonial perspectives.

The project achieved several transformative changes among its target groups. It raised awareness of the role and impact of gender in various contexts and also allowed new insights, promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. While Eurocentric views were questioned, participants were encouraged to engage in an open and respectful dialogue. The project has promoted critical thinking by encouraging participants to question existing viewpoints and consider various perspectives. It has developed analytical teaching materials intended to be integrated into the school routine, creating an environment that encourages critical reflection.

The project involved extensive research by student assistants, the creation of a project description published on the

University of Bayreuth website, and the organisation of workshops, lectures, discussions, group work, and expert interviews. Advanced training for teaching staff at Iwalewaha took place several times.

The grant-funded project has brought together a diverse group of collaborators, including the Chair of Geography Didactics, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, and external colleagues. In particular, the cooperation with the University of Education of Winneba (UEW), Ghana enriched the project significantly. Collaborators included Esther Yeboah Danso-Wiredu, Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel, and Gertrude Nkrumah, all from UEW. They met with engaged teachers, students, and multipliers in the field of global learning and ESD. Through a combination of workshops, theoretical input, practical implementation, and classroom testing, the team developed teaching materials that are now available on the Cluster's PLURA homepage and distributed through various channels in teacher networks. Additionally, these materials are being promoted through training sessions and seminars at the University of Bayreuth and beyond. A successful evaluation could lead to a follow-up project. 🌍



Participants of the PLURA workshop that took place at UBT on 15 June 2023.

## NEWS



### Dissertation Prize of the DGSKA 2023

The German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology (DGSKA) awarded Carsten Mildner the Dissertation Prize for his work *DEAF-DEAF-DIFFERENT. ambiguities of being deaf in Benin*.

Mildner's dissertation focuses on the diversity of lifestyles and communities of deaf people in the Republic of Benin. He looks at institutions for the deaf such as schools and churches, but also focuses on deaf people living

in rural areas away from organised Deaf networks. Based on 14 months of field research and in dialogue with the research participants, Mildner developed concepts that bring together the scientific view and the Deaf perspectives in Benin.

With the first monograph on deafness in Benin and one of the few African Studies contributions on the topic, Mildner makes an important contribution to the literature on deafness(es) and disability. In a field that continues to be dominated by categorisation, paternalism, and standardisation, from the perspective of medicine and rehabilitation as well as from the culturalist perspective of Deaf Studies, he calls for attention to ambivalence and complexity as well as to local perspectives and values.

Mildner's dissertation shows that Deaf communities in Benin are by no means parallel societies but reproduce the social structures of hearing Benin in their own way. An ethnography of the Deaf in Benin is thus also an ethnography of Benin. Belongings in multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual societies are also diverse and resist simplifying classifications.



### Dissertation Prize of the DGSKA 2023

The DGSKA awarded Jo Sarre the Dissertation Prize for the text *"Some call it Slum, we call it Home!" – Negotiations of Belonging among the Nubian Inhabitants of Kibera, Kenya*.

The core question of the work is how people feel they belong to other people and places they consider home.

Sarre's outstanding language skills (Kiswahili, Sheng, and some KiNubi), led to them living in a Nubian slum household in Kibera for several months, and acquiring the necessary skills to navigate Kibera safely. This enabled them to produce work that offers a unique insight into the everyday life of a slum. Sarre did their bachelor's degree in Culture and Society of Africa in Bayreuth and moved afterwards to Leiden University in the Netherlands for a master's degree in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. Most recently, Sarre held the position of Academic Councillor at the Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Bayreuth.

### Fellowship

In March 2023, Erdmute Alber, Chair of social anthropology at the University Bayreuth, was awarded a fellowship at the Merian Institute of Advanced African Studies (MIASA) in Accra, Ghana. For a duration of four months, she participated in the interdisciplinary Fellow research group Increasing West African Women's Participation in Politics, headed by Gretchen Bauer. In addition to her individual research program on women in politics in the Republic of Benin, she organised, together with colleagues, a conference and a panel, as well as a joint publication.



# Cluster publications: Reading Recommendations

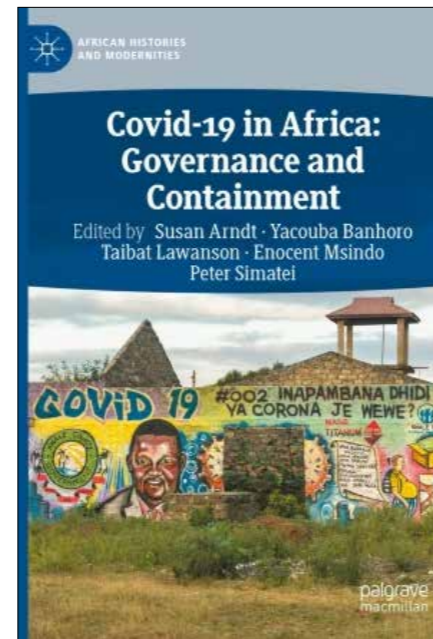
Each year, the members of the Institute of African Studies (IAS), the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, as well as graduates of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) publish the latest results of their research in various formats. While you can have a look at the extensive number of publications of our affiliated scholars by clicking the QR code at the end of this section, the presented selection below is limited only to books and monographs published in 2023. Enjoy the read!

Susan Arndt, Yacouba Banhoro, Taibat Lawanson, Enocent Msindo, Peter Simatei (Eds.):

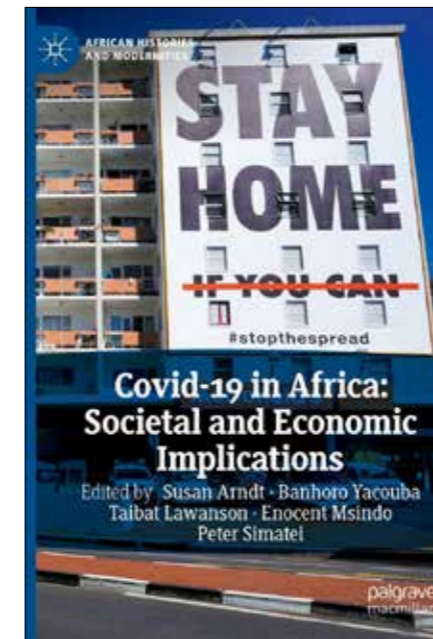
**Covid-19 in Africa: Governance and Containment.** Springer Link, 2023

As part of the book series African Histories and Modernities (AHAM) published at Springer Link, these two edited volumes were written amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. They draw on the expertise of social scientists and

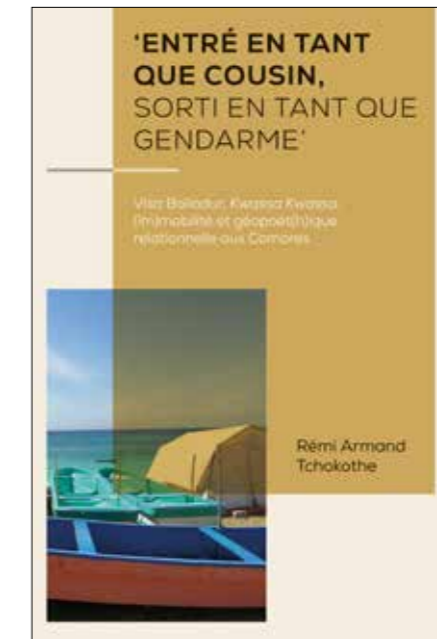
humanities scholars to understand the several ramifications of Covid-19 in societies, politics, and the economies of Africa. The contributors examine measures, communicative practices, and experiences that have guided the (inter) action of governments, societies and citizens in this unpredictable moment. Covid-19 tested governments' disaster preparedness as well as exposed governments' attitudes towards the poor



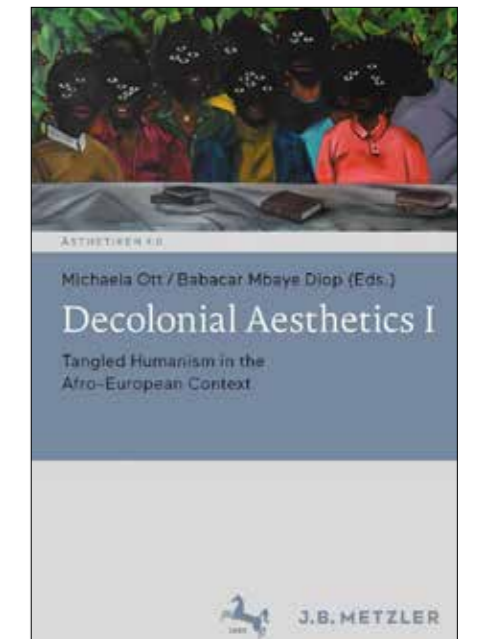
and vulnerable. In the same vein, it also tested the agency of the generality of the African populace in the face of containment measures and how these had an impact on everyday social, cultural and economic practices of the ordinary peoples. In this vein, the editors' aim is to understand the relationship between



“He came as a cousin and left as a gendarme.” – this anecdote expresses the identity paradox in the Comoros and the ‘migration’ drama that has been happening in the Archipelago since the arbitrary introduction of the Balladur Visa in 1995. Mayotte that is ‘officially’ French has been labelled “the biggest



cultural contexts between Germany, France, Senegal, Benin, Nigeria and Tunisia – do not only refer to heterogeneous aesthetic practices understood as subversive and decolonial strategies, but also discuss philosophical questions of a renewed (non-)dividual humanism. The artistic practices ana-



growing vulnerability on the one hand and ingenuity of agency on the other, and how both were embodied, narrated and discoursed by the African poor, university students, religious entities, and middle-classes, and those that bore the major brunt of the lockdowns.

Both volumes are useful resources for scholars of Africa, policy makers and those who want to understand Covid-19 in Africa. They provide a multiplicity of perspectives of the pandemic and African responses at different levels of society, economy and the political spectrum. The continental focus of these volumes gives room for broader comparative analyses. Lastly, these interdisciplinary publications benefit from the input of medical historians, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, political scientists, literature scholars, urban planners, geographers and others.

Rémi Armand Tchokothe: **'Entré en tant que cousin, sorti en tant que gendarme' Visa Balladur, Kwassa, (im)mobilité et géopoét(h)ique relationnelle aux Comores**, Brill, 2023

marine graveyard in the world”. How can works of imagination on “migration” from Anjouan to Mayotte constitute a kind of collective social therapy and social intervention? *'Entré en tant que cousin, sorti en tant que gendarme' Visa Balladur, Kwassa Kwassa, (im)mobilité et géopoét(h)ique relationnelle aux Comores*, the second book published of the Africa Multiple series at Brill, answers this question (among others) by studying 18 works, and combining literary studies with anthropology, sociology, history and international law.

Michaela Ott, Babacar Mbaye Diop (Eds.): **Decolonial Aesthetics I – Tangled Humanism in the Afro-European Context**, J.B. Metzler, 2023

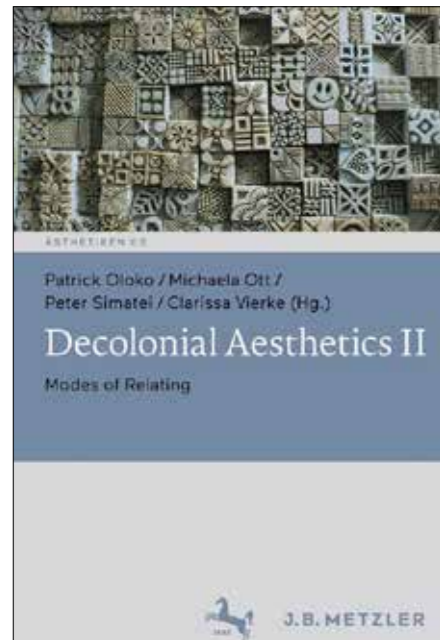
Patrick Oloko, Michaela Ott, Peter Simatei, Clarissa Vierke (Eds.): **Decolonial Aesthetics II – Modes of Relating**, J.B. Metzler, 2023

The volume *Decolonial Aesthetics I – Tangled Humanism in the Afro-European Context* aims to make suggestions for a 'decolonisation of aesthetics' within an Afro-European framework. The texts – whose authors come from different

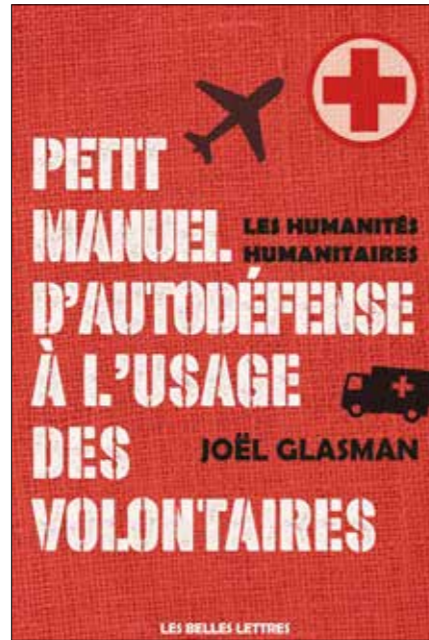
lysed include artistic installations and ensembles as well as actions in urban and rural space, deceptive manoeuvres at the borders and their photographic documentation, and many more.

The second book *Decolonial Aesthetics II – Modes of Relating* features writing by 17 authors from Germany and from African and Latin American countries on highly diverse aesthetic phenomena as seen from their own different points of view. The texts in this volume all deal with the imperative of 'decolonization': they try to highlight aesthetic strategies for the (re)discovery of unthematized, misappropriated, transcultural and even transcontinental histories and memories and aesthetic practices that are absent from or too little perceived within national consciousnesses. Novels, poems and musical performances from the East African region are analysed as intertwined histories of the Indian Ocean and its different languages. Artworks of the Black Atlantic and perceptions of Africa are discussed from, for example, Brazilian perspectives. Within the German context, decolonisation strategies in exhibition





practices in ethnological or art museums developed by Nigerian artists are evaluated; new terms such as 'dividuation' are proposed to describe these contemporary composite-cultural entanglements, and so on. A stimulating, wide-ranging and heterogeneous portrait of contemporary interwoven world cultures!

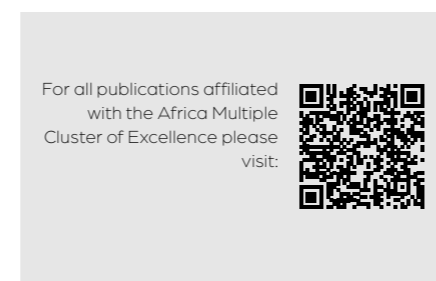


Joël Glasman: **Petit manuel d'autodéfense à l'usage des volontaires – Les humanités humanitaires**, Les Belles Lettres, 2023

Humanitarian action involves difficult choices. Should we accept the conditions of access imposed by the jihadists? Should you leave refugee camps

when aid is diverted? Can we accept donations from any private company? Should humanitarian organisations make the fight against global warming their priority?

*Petit manuel d'autodéfense à l'usage des volontaires – Les humanités humanitaires* offers a time for reflection. From the history of humanitarian action to the anthropology of global health and the sociology of massacres, this handbook written by Joël Glasman provides an overview of the most useful research for thinking in emergency situations. An introduction to the human and social sciences for those who help others to save their lives and dignity.



## Africa Multiple connects 5-7

### WORKING PAPER SERIES

of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence



All Working Papers are downloadable (Open Access).

Drescher, Martina:  
**Zur epistemischen Rahmung von Gerüchten im Covid-19 Diskurs Kameruns.**

Bayreuth, Germany: Institute of African Studies, 2024. – VI, 52 S. – (University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers; 52) (Africa Multiple connects; 7)

Drescher, Martina:  
**Doing ethics. An outline of a constructivist and phenomenological approach of moral communication.**

Bayreuth, Germany: Institute of African Studies, 2024. – VI, 16 S. – (University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers; 49) (Africa Multiple connects; 6)

Sylla, Ndongo Samba:  
**Live as African: On the Relevance of Thomas Sankara's Agenda for Economic Liberation.**

Bayreuth, Germany: Institute of African Studies, 2022. – VII, 19 S. – (University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers; 33) (Africa Multiple connects; 5)

# The International Fellowship Scheme in 2023

Text ROBERT DEBUSMANN

**In 2023, the Bayreuth Academy (BA) Fellows programme was characterised by a highly academic appeal and a distinctly collegial spirit. Twenty-one Fellows accepted their invitation to Bayreuth in the course of the year, among them two "tandems" in which the applicants had previously coordinated their projects in order to work closely together in Bayreuth. In addition, four artists came to the BA as part of the Artists in Residence programme. One affiliated Fellow with external funding joined the group in the course of the year.**

As in previous years, the Fellows fostered academic exchange in a vibrant atmosphere characterised by open curiosity and mutual respect. All the Fellows presented their project concepts and findings in a short talk at the Academy Lunch, where their colleagues and occasional guests com-

mented on the presentations in a lively and constructive manner. The weekly Academy Lunch meetings continued to be absolute highlights of academic life in the Cluster, examples of open thought, vivid discussion, and weight-ed commentary.

Fellows also joined one of the Cluster's research sections where they participated in the meetings. All participants gave their Fellow Lecture in this context and received feedback from the section members. They also took regular part in Knowledge Lab events where they actively contributed to the academic exchange. While the regular Cluster members increasingly withdrew into their projects, the Fellows took centre stage at many of the Cluster's events. They worked with dedication on the annual theme of Spatialities, to which the annual theme organisers had invited in all-Cluster fora. A number of Fellows presented papers at the topical annual conference or even chaired a whole conference panel.

The BA Fellows also met with BIGSAS Junior Fellows, whetting the appetite for more. Unfortunately, the short duration of the BA Fellowships hinders long-term collaboration. However, individual Fellows have discovered that they can use the BA Postdoc Working Group scheme to overcome this, and have submitted successful applications. Regarding output, BA Fellows have published over 40 articles or book contributions on their projects, some of them in the BA's own Working Paper series Academy Reflects.

Alongside these positive outcomes of the Fellow Programme, some of its problems have also remained. Long visa waiting times, expensive accommodation, lack of childcare and university bureaucracy burden the programme. Thanks to the friendly patience of our guests, this unpleasant backside has not damaged Bayreuth's reputation as a world centre for African studies.



The fellow cohort of 2022/23 met regularly to discuss their research projects.

Photo: Sabine Greiner

# Fellows in 2023



**Noemi Alfieri:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
Mapping Anti-Colonial Networks through Literature. Transnational Connections of African Thinkers in the Reconfiguration of Space and Thought (1950s–1970s)



**Femi Jegede:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
The Conquest of Distance: The Dialectics of Ifa Divination Systems from Yoruba Land to Afro-America Spaces (Tandem project)



**Renzo Baas:**  
01.10.2022–31.03.2023  
Speculative Spatialities

**Judith Bachmann:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
The Conquest of Distance: A Genealogy of Ifa's Global Spatialities (Tandem Project)



**Pamila Gupta:**  
01.05.2023–31.07.2023  
From Indian Ocean to African Indian: Through the Refracted Lens of Capital Art Studio, Zanzibar



**Katrin Seidel:**  
01.11.2023–30.04.2024  
De-centring International and Internationalised Peace Mediation in Africa



**Valerie Nur:**  
01.10.2023–30.11.2023  
Gold Connections in Northern Niger



**Elishifa Elamin:**  
15.11.2023–15.04.2024  
The Coloniality of Language in Sudan



**Suleiman Athuman Chembea:**  
01.10.2023–31.03.2024  
Chanted Poetry and Women's Bodies in the Creation and Dissemination of Islamic Knowledge and Cultural Identity in Zanzibar



**Halil Ibrahim Arpa (associated fellow):**  
01.10.2023–30.09.2024  
Decolonial Hi/stories: Literary Subversion of Colonial and Post-colonial Historiographies



**Wandia Njoya:** 24.10.2022–23.04.2023  
New Imaginaries and Critical Engagements for Education and Knowledge Production (Tandem project)

**Stephen Brown:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
Strategic Litigation and the Decriminalisation of Homosexuality in Africa



**Elizabeth Cooper:**  
24.10.2022–23.04.2023  
New Imaginaries and Critical Engagements for Education and Knowledge Production (Tandem project)



**Alexandre Vieira (Artist Fellow):**  
01.03.2023–31.07.2023  
The Melodic-Rhythmic Conundrum of African (Diaspora) Music. Vocal and Instrumental Interaction in African-based Music Performance



**Don Edward Walicek:**  
01.10.2023–31.03.2024  
Language Ideologies and Social Contact Involving West Africans and the English on the Gold Coast



**Moses Yakubu:**  
01.10.2023–21.12.2023  
The Involvement of Elderly Women in Traditional Male Cults and Festivals in Egba Land



**Lamine Doumbia:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
Land Governance and Bureaucratisation in Bamako, Ouagadougou, and Dakar – Mimicry and Hybridisation of Logics



**Thokozani Mhlambi (Artist Fellow):**  
16.10.2022–15.04.2023  
Umgungundlovu Suite for Reed Ensemble



**Bakheit Mohammed Nur:**  
01.10.2022–31.07.2023  
Relational Knowledge Politics in Sudanese Islamic Universities



**Joseph Kasule:**  
01.10.2023–31.03.2024  
Public Intellectualism and Decolonial Epistemologies in Contestable Political Imaginations of Buganda (Uganda) and Bergen (Norway).



**Faisal Garba Muhammed:**  
01.12.2022–30.06.2023  
Theorising Migration from Shifting Notions of Territoriality, Belonging, and Mobility in Africa



**Dhruv Raina:** 01.10.2022–31.01.2023  
Decolonising the Disciplines: The Experience of India and Africa (1950–1970)



**Jean-Pierre Bekolo (Artist Fellow):**  
09.04.2023–09.07.2023  
Cinema as a Transformative Tool for the Therapeutic Intellectual



**Anthony C. Diala:**  
21.01.2023–21.07.2023  
Towards Legal Integration in sub-Saharan Africa



**Maja Figge:**  
01.02.2023–31.07.2023  
Afrodiasporic Post-Cinemas



**Isabelle Carine Bahanag Oyieh (Artist Fellow):**  
01.10.2023–31.03.2024  
Producing a Script for the Project "ANLU", a Historical Fiction Graphic Novel Inspired by the Cameroonian Socio-political Researcher Rose Ndengue

Fellows 2022/23



Fellows 2023/24



Fellow Lectures



Cluster Conversation podcast with the Fellows



# Events in 2023

Photo: Adobe Stock

## January

**08.–15.01.2023 – Workshop: Toward an Islamic Cultural Archive** in Bayreuth  
Ramzi Ben Amara, Mohamed Suleiman Mraja, Hassan Juma Ndzovu, Abdourahmane Seck, Fatimatou Abdel Wahhab

**12.01.2023 – Presentation, Discussion: Mapping the religious footprint in Lagos, Presentation and Discussion** in Bayreuth  
Taibat O. Lawanson

**12.01.2023 – Knowledge Lab: Burning Ambition: Education, Arson, and Learning Justice in Kenya** in Bayreuth  
Elizabeth Cooper

**12.01.2023 – Lecture: Lecture Series: Intersectionality Studies. Approaches and Visions: Intersectional Approaches to Childism** in Bayreuth  
Tanu Biswas

**18.01.2023 – Workshop: African (digital) heritage workshop** in Bayreuth  
Emmanuel Akwasi Adu-Ampong, Thierry Boudjekeu, Markus Coester, Joël Glasman, Edidiong Charles Ibanga, Flower Manase, Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Tom Michael Mboya, Sabelo Mcinziba, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Astrid Swenson, Luisa Schneider, Clarissa Vierke, Lee Watkins, Aaron Yankholmes

**18.01.2023 – Discussion: Roundtable Discussion: Constitutionalising and Entrenching African Traditional Legal Systems – prospects and challenges** in Bayreuth  
Bonolo Dinokopila, Gift Mauluka

**19.01.2023 – Lecture: Oruka On Home, Will And Spirits: A Philosophical Interpretation** in Abuja  
Muyiwa Falaiye

**19.01.2023 – Knowledge Lab: Symposium on Spatialities** in Bayreuth  
Lauren Dyll, Stephan Günzel

**19.01.2023 – Lecture: Lecture Series: Intersectionality Studies. Approaches and Visions: Intersectional Approaches to Sexism** in Bayreuth  
Susan Arndt

**21.01.2023 – New Year Lecture 2023: Ten Challenges in Reconfiguring African Studies** in Bayreuth  
Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Nina Nestler, Christine Vogt-William

**22.–25.01.2023 – Film Screening/Discussion: Cinema Africa – African Film Festival** in Bayreuth  
Eugene Boateng, Pamela Diop, Cédric Ido, Gudrun Columbus Mwanyika

**26.01.2023 – Presentation: Ifa Divination Practice in/as global spatial dynamics – Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives** in Bayreuth  
Judith Bachmann, Obafemi Jegede

**26.01.2023 – Lecture: The Inheritance of Loss and Uncertain Futures of History** in Bayreuth  
Sabelo Mcinziba



## February

**02.02.2023 – Knowledge Lab: ICDL Book Launch and Panel Discussion on “African Women in Digital Spaces: Redefining Social Movements on the Continent and in the Diaspora”** in Bayreuth  
Winston Mano, Clark Msia, Elizabeth Ohene, Mohamed Wunpini

**02.02.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: Taiwo Shango** in Bayreuth  
Olalekan Balogun, Carli Coetzee, Wolfgang Fuhrmann, James Gibbs, Christine Matzke, Onookome Okome, Bode Omojola

**02.02.2023 – Lecture: Lecture Series: Intersectionality Studies. Approaches and Visions: Banning the M-Word. The agency of activism** in Bayreuth  
Ruth Hunstock, Thomas Hunstock

**8.02.2023 – Discussion: Reconceptualizing citizen or stakeholder participation in law reform in an African setting** in Bayreuth  
Hope M. Ndhlovu-Chanda, Nelson Otieno

**13.–18.02.2023 – Conference: Religion et transformation sociale au Niger: Dynamiques, acteurs et enjeux** in Niamey  
Abdourahmane Idrissa Abdoulaye, Oumarou Hamani, Moulaye Hassane, Seyni Moumouni, Mahamane Mahaboubou Malam Sani, Ouassa Tiekoura, Mahaman Sanoussi Tidjani Alou, Moussa Zangaou

**13.02.2023 – Opening event: Intersectionality Studies Opening** in Bayreuth  
Maisha Auma, Miriam Bauch, Nihan Duran, Louisa Kamrath, Kibouni Koné, Nina Nestler, Peggy Piesche, Shankar Raman, Rüdiger Seesemann, Patrick Tschirner, Tarek Shukrallah

**14.–18.02.2023 – Workshop: Afrotopia(S) – Emerging Futures In Arts, Politics And Religion** in Ouagadougou  
Antje Daniel, Magnus Echlter, Melina Kalfelis, Samuel Ndogo, Fridjou Emilie Georgette Sanon-Ouattara, Ludovic Kibora, Issa Fofana, Amatoritsero Ede, Joseph Tonda, Yacouba Banhoru, Eza. Nana, Paul-Marie Moyenga, Dieter Neubert, Lena Kroeker, Ingrid Artus, Hermann Savadogo, Bettina Engels

**15.02.2023 – Lecture: Toponymy As A Source Of Knowledge: The Importance Of Yorùbá Place Names** in Lagos  
Luqman Ayodele Yusuff

**21.02.–21.12.2023 – Discussion: ICDL Roundtable on African Masculinities, GDO Knowledge Lab session** in Bayreuth  
Olajamuke Jacob Hailiso, Gavaza Maluleke, Sabelo Mcinziba, Christabel Sam

**22.–23.02.2023 – Workshop: Africa’s Mobility Struggles. Infrastructuring African (Im)mobilities** in Eldoret  
Tracy Engu Abit, Peter Adey, Shadle Brett, Simoes de Araujo Caio, Yacouba Cissao, Mennatullah Hendawy, Houd Kanazoe, Conrad John Masabo, Faisal G. Mohammed, Christopher Muhoozi, Ricardo John Munyegera, Gladys Nyachio, Uche Okonkwo, Peter Simatei, Mariama Zaami

Cédric Ido  
(22.–25.01.23)



## March

**06.–08.03.2023 – Conference: Multiple Perspectives On Spatialities And Innovations In Francophone West Africa** in Ouagadougou

Erdmute Alber, Yacouba Banhoro, Isaac Bazie, Thierry Boudjekeu, Oumarou Boukari, Babacar Mbaye Diop, Adama Drabo, Ute Fendler, Jean-Francois Kobiané, Issifou Moumouni, Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo, Michaela Ott, Ousséni Sore, Justin Ouoro, Eveline Sawadogo-Compaoré, Cyrille Semde, Boniface Somé, Marie Tsogo, Ousséini Illy

**21.03.2023 – Africa Colloquium Seminar: Linguistic And Cultural Artifacts As Vehicles Of Cultural Epistemology: A Study Of Pots, Fire And Gourds Among The Yoruba** in Nairobi  
Feiyisayo Ademola-Adeoye

**22.03.2023 – Lecture: Ifa: Knowledge for untying the lingering epistemological knots/Ifa: Connaissance pour dénouer les nœuds épistémologiques persistants** in Bayreuth  
Olukayode S. Eesuola

**28.03.2023 – Seminar: Generation Z and Political Participation in Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe** in Grahamstown  
Chido Masunda

## April

**11.–14.04.2023 – Colloquium: Colonial Letters and the Contact of Knowledges: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Colonial Correspondences** in Bayreuth

Usman Ahmad, Sakariyau Alabi Aliyu, Eric Anchimbe, Mompoloki M. Bagwasi, Pepetual Mforbe Chaingong, Julius A. Eyoh, Stephen A. Mforteh, Sarah Marjie, Paul Opondo, Glory Essien Otung, Uchenna Oyali, Valentine N. Ubanako

**12.–15.04.2023 – Conference: Arabic in Africa: Historical and Sociolinguistic Perspectives** in Bayreuth

Sakariyau Alabi Aliyu, Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn, Elshifa Mohammed Nour Elamin, Jonathan Owens, Rüdiger Seesemann, Valentina Serrelli

**17.04.2023 – Lecture: Biodocs: The Politics of Greatness** in Bayreuth

Alexie Tcheuyap

**18.04.2023 – Workshop: Growing Up in African City** in Lagos  
Betty Abah, Bamidele Alabi, Sonnie Ekwowusi, Tunde Onakoya, Olamide Udoma-Ejorh

**18.04.2023 – Seminar: Africa colloquium seminar: Oral Literature, Gender And Ideology: The Image Of The Woman In Kamba Circumcision Songs** in Eldoret

Naomi Nzilani Musembi

**18.04.2023 – Discussion: Filmmaking in Africa: Narratives from Africa and the Diaspora** in Bayreuth

Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Ute Fendler, Alexie Tcheuyap

**19.04.2023 – Lecture: Extalgia – transcending the legible frames of diaspora** in Lagos

Senayon Olaoluwa

**20.04.2023 – Knowledge Lab: Opening Plenary Session** in Bayr.  
Matthias Gebauer, Eberhard Rothfuß

**20.04.2023 – Guest Lecture: The Earthly Community as part of the Knowledge Lab & Seminar Series “The Changing African Idea of Africa and the Future of African Studies”** in Johannesburg, Bayreuth, and Dakar  
Achille Mbembe

**20.04.2023 – Concert Screening and Live Performance: Sounding African Music Heritage** in Bayreuth  
Markus Coester, Thokozani Mhlambi

**25.04.2023 – Book Launch: Guerrillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa** in Makhanda  
Siphokazi Magadla, Thandeka Gqubule-Mbeki, Thoko Sipungu, Lynda Spencer

**26.04.2023 – Lecture: Religious engineering: projects of transformation in Niger** in Bayreuth  
Ralf Behrwald, Eva Spies

**27.04.2023 – Lecture: Land Governance and airport infrastructures in Senegal: Ethnography of social spatial reconfiguration** in Bayreuth  
Lamine Doumbia

**27.04.2023 – Lecture: Intersections of Coloured Transness in South Africa VS the globe** in Bayreuth  
Katharina Fink, Angel-Ho

**27.04.2023 – Fellow Lecture: Visibility or impact? International efforts to defend LGBTIQ+ rights in Africa** in Bayreuth  
Stephen Brown

Thokozani Mhlambi (20.04.23)



Ustadh Mahmoud Mau (19.–21.05.23)



Jean-Alexander Ntivyihabwa and Cassandra Mark-Thiesen (10.05.23)



## May

**02.–09.05.2023 – Workshop: Non-Identities, Entanglements, Dividuations** in Bayreuth

Akande Abiodun, Elisabeth Bronfen, Joan Copjec, Babacar Mbaye Diop, Jan Gerber, Lisa Gotto, Christoph Hesse, Walter Benn Michaels, Clemens Nachtmann, Michaela Ott, Ivo Ritzer, Andreas Robnik, Keyan Tomaselli, Alenka Zupancic

**04.05.2023 – Discussion: Legal Responses to Climate Change: A Multi-level, multi-actor approach** in Bayreuth

Gift Mauluka, Walters Nsoh

**04.05.2023 – Discussion: Eclectic reflections on spaces as demonstrated in the COVID 19 Pandemic and the oil industry: Lessons from South Africa** in Bayreuth

Akinmayowa Paul Akin-Otiko, Taibat O. Lawanson, Kayode Soremekun

**09.05.2023 – Colloquium: Geographisches Kolloquium – Just Food Transitions: Navigating Tensions Between Environmental And Social Justice Concerns In Community Food Initiatives** in Bayreuth

Marit Rosol

**09.05.–15.05.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: Cinema as a Transformative Tool for the Therapeutic Intellectual** in Bayreuth

Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Ute Fendler

**10.05.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: AfriKaleidoskop in collaboration with ARTE - Raubkunst in Benin City** in Bayreuth

Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Jean-Alexander Ntivyihabwa

**11.05.2023 – Knowledge Lab: ICDL Event – Making Life Sing in Pursuit of Utu: The Micere Githae Mugo Story** in Bayreuth  
Wangui wa Goro, Jennifer Kamau, Catherine Jematia Kiprop, Muthoni Mathai, Rahab Njeri, Christine Vogt-William

**12.05.2023 – Africa Colloquium Seminar: Anthem For Africa** in Eldoret

Timothy Wangusa

**15.05.2023 – Arts & Performances: Transoceanic Musical Lectures** in Bayreuth

Jean Luc Raharimanana, Alexandre Vieira

**16.05.2023 – Lecture: The African Studies Library – Enhancing Discoverability of Publications from African Publishers Through Knowledge Graphs** in Bayreuth

Anne Schumann Douousson

**16.05.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: Cinema As A Transformative Tool For The Therapeutic Intellectual** in Bayreuth

Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Ute Fendler

**17.05.2023 – Lecture: The Nexus between Onomastics and Critical Discourse Approach: An Analysis of selected toponyms in Lagos Nigeria.** in Lagos  
Margaret Jongore

**19.–21.05.2023 – 35th NABili Colloquium: Mashujaa. Reconfiguring Swahili Studies** in Bayreuth

Mark Kandagor, Shani Omari Mchepange, Naomi Nzilani Musembi, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Annachiara Raia, Jean Luc Raharimanana, Duncan Tarrant, Razza Abdalla Issa Timammy, Clarissa Vierke, Abdilatif Abdallah, Faruk Topan

**22.05.2023 – Lecture: Bayreuth Peace Talk: Shattered Hope – The Conflict in Sudan** in Bayreuth

Samah Khalaf Allah, Kurt Beck, Elshifa Mohammednour Elamin, Bakheit Mohammed Nur, Joschka Philipps, Rüdiger Seesemann

**23.05.2023 – Seminar: Feminization of Learning Institutions and Religious Activities: Reflections from Female Muslim Scholars in Kenya** in Makhanda

Hassan Juma Ndzovu

**23.05.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: Cinema As A Transformative Tool For The Therapeutic Intellectual** in Bayreuth

Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Ute Fendler

**25.05.2023 – Seminar: Under-Determination Of Rationality In Morality And Politics And The Necessity Of Virtues** in Nairobi  
Luke Odiemo

**25.05.2023 – Seminar: Development, (Dual) Citizenship and Its Discontents in Africa** in Bayreuth

Robtel Neajai Pailey

**30.05.–03.06.2023 – Conference: ECAS 2023** in Cologne  
Noemi Alfieri, Judith Bachmann, Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Obafemi Jegede, Jochen Lingelbach, Doris Löhr, Sabrina Maurus, Joschka Philipps



Alexis Tcheuyap and Jean-Pierre Bekolo (18.04.23)

## June

**01.06.2023 – Lecture: ICDL Lecture: Intersectional Complexities, Diversity Optics and Axes of Space** in Bayreuth  
Nirmal Puwar

**06.06.2023 – Workshop: PhotoVoice as a Practice of Representation and Social Solidarity** in Bayreuth  
Shose Kessi

**13.06.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: Cinema As A Transformative Tool For The Therapeutic Intellectual – Miraculous Weapons: Exploring the Negritude idea of using the French Language to save us as Black People from the French Oppression** in Bayreuth  
Jean-Pierre Bekolo

**14.06.2023 – Film screening/Discussion: AfriKaleidoskop meets ARTE – “YES WE CAN – die neue Schwarze Malerei”** in Bayreuth  
Ute Fendler, Maia Dandara Schellenberg, Marion Schmidt

**15.06.2023 – Seminar: Spatialities Reading Seminar: Wangui Kimari on Outlaw Spaces and their discursive discrimination in Nairobi and beyond** in Bayreuth  
Wangui Kimari

**21.06.2023 – Lecture: The Smoke Screen Theory And The Impact On Traditional Healthcare System In Southwest Nigeria** in Lagos  
Akinmayowa Paul Akin-Otiko

**21.06.2023 – Arts & Performances: Transoceanic Encounters: Brazil-Mozambique** in Bayreuth  
Luka Mukavele, Alexandre Vieira

**22.06.2023 – Workshop: Towards a Participatory and Inclusive Constitutional Dialogue: Strategies for Achieving Somalisation through technical solutions and people-centred Approaches** in Bayreuth  
Abdikarim M. Ahmed, Ali Jimale, Thokozani Kaime



Artist Fellow Alexandre Vieira (15.05./21.06.23)

**22.06.2023 – Discussion: Roundtable on Decoloniality, Spatiality, Intersectionality and Reconfiguring historiographic analysis** in Bayreuth  
Britta Frede, Jochen Lingelbach, Farish Noor, Rüdiger Seesemann, Shobana Shankar

**22.06.2023 – Seminar: The Changing African Idea of Africa and the Future of African Studies** in Bayreuth  
Zubairu Wai

**22.06.2023 – Discussion, Arts & Performances: The Highlife Heritage Concert** in Makhanda  
Markus Coester, Lee Watkins

**24.06.2023 – Arts & Performances: Community Outreach Research Project – “Egazini meets ILAM”: Isingqi Sikantu Musical Experience** in Makhanda, South Africa  
Markus Coester

**27.06.2023 – Seminar: Gender-Based Violence In Primary School: Perspectives From Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, & Jamaica** in Eldoret  
Mary Akinyi Otieno

**28.06.–01.07.2023 – Colloquium: Colloque International: Utopies Africaines/Afrodystopies – Représentations et discours littéraires, médiatiques et culturels** in Pessac  
Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Ute Fendler, Sylv.re Mbondobari, Albert Kasanda, Alena Rettová, Joseph Tonda

**28.06.2023 – Guest Lecture: Reproduction and Human Rights** in Bayreuth  
Ulrike Lembke

**29.06.2023 – Visit: Somali Delegation from SIMAD University** in Bayreuth  
Dahir Hassan Abdi, Abdikarim Mohaidin Ahmed, Ali Olow Jimale, Thoko Kaime, Mohamed Mohamud Mohamed, Khadija Shamsi Mohamed, Fartun Ahmed Sheikh Mohamud, Isabelle Zundel



Thoko Kaime and Dahir Hassan Abdi (29.06.23)

## July

**06.–07.07.2023 – Workshop: Making, Contesting and Navigating Space: Between Religion, Indigenous Knowledge and Politics** in Bayreuth  
Asaf Augusto, Judith Bachmann, Lamine Doumbia, Magnus Ehtler, Fulera Issaka-Toure, Obafemi Jegede, Taibat O. Lawanson, Jacob Olupona, Akinmayowa Otiko, Glory Essien Otung

**06.07.2023 – Lecture: The costs of illiteracy in Benin: How illiteracized people assume their citizenship** in Bayreuth  
Issifou Abou Moumouni

**11.–12.07.2023 – Workshop: Beyond the Digital Return: New Heritage/s, Sustainability, and the Decolonisation of Music Archives in South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana** in Accra  
Moses Adjei, Markus Coester, Sita Korley, Elijah Madiba, Tom Michael Mboya, Kwabena Nketia, Grace Olaoluwa, Judith Opoku-Boateng, Tabitha Osoro, Eric Sunu, Grace Takyi, Lee Watkins

**11.07.2023 – Lecture: Lecture Series “African Feminisms Past and Present”: The Thesis of the Single Errection: Disaggregating Patriarchy** in Bayreuth  
Serawit Debele, Divine Fuh, Faisal Garba, Cassandra Mark-Thiesen

**13.07.2023 – Lecture: Why Accumulation matters: Recentering Land, Wealth and Finance in the Study of African Societies** in Bayreuth  
Kai Koddenbrock, Taibat O. Lawanson

**13.07.2023 – The Changing Ideas of Africa and African Languages Guest Lecture** in Bayreuth  
Finex Ndhlovu

**17.07.2023 – Film screening: Afronauts to Androids: African Science** in Bayreuth  
Maisha Maene

**19.07.2023 – Lecture: The Imperative To Reform US-African Relations** in Lagos  
Mohamed Saliou Camara

**19.07.2023 – Lecture: 3rd Okwui Enwezor Distinguished Lecture: Külturhane: Hope in the Age of Compost** in Bayreuth  
Ulas Bayraktar, Katharina Fink, Rüdiger Seesemann, Bediz Yilmaz



Bediz Yilmaz (19.07.23)

## August

**01.08.2023 – Africa Colloquium Seminar: Finding Voice In African Studies** in Eldoret  
Lydia Muthuma

**08.08.2023 – Seminar: Valorization Of Slackness: A Phenomenological Discourse Analysis Of Dancehall Music Culture In Jamaica And Zimbabwe** in Makhanda  
Tanesha Gibbs

**09.08.2023 – Lecture: Sustainable Waste Practices In Urban Communities: Insights From Lagos, Nigeria And Eldoret, Kenya** in Lagos  
Elizabeth Murey

**16.08.2023 – Lecture: Femi Odugbemi’s Unmasked – The Failed State And Postcolonial Necropolitics In Nigeria** in Lagos  
Paul Ugor

**16.08.2023 – Political Visit: South African Consul General** in Bayreuth  
Roleta Lebelo, Daniel Pretorius, Marida van der Westhuizen-Nel

**21.–25.08.2023 – Workshop: Stakeholders Workshop and Advanced Methods Lab III** in Pretoria  
Abiy Alemu Ashenafi, Landilani Banda, Bonolo Dinokopila, Elvis Fokala, Ironanya, Felisa Kilembe, Kuria Milka Wahu, Alan Msosa, Mwambene, Joel Modiri, Nkatha Murungi, McBride Nkhalamba, Chanel van der Linde

**22.–24.08.2023 – Workshop, Panel Discussion: Stakeholders Workshop & Advanced Methods** in Pretoria  
Abiy Alemu Ashenafi, Landilani Banda, Serawit Debele, Bonolo Dinokopila, Elvis Fokala, R. O. Ironanya, Felisa Rose Mitambo, Alan Msosa, Lea Mwambene, McBride Nkhalamba, Thokozani Kaime, Joel Modiri, Nkatha Murungi, Sesanti Simphiwe, Chanel Van der Linde, Kuria Milka Wahu, Isabelle Zundel

**24.08.2023 – Political Visit: Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development** in Bayreuth  
Anette Kramme, Tobias Schmidmeier, Svenja Schulze, Halil Tasdelen

**29.08.2023 – Seminar: Accessing the Invisible through the Eye of the Artist – The Idealism of seeing things** in Grahamstown  
Patrick Mwepu

## IAS Guests 2022

Abdallah Ly, Mouhamed	Dakar, Senegal	24.06.2023 – 01.07.2023
Bakpa, Mimboabe	Togo	20.09.2023 – 01.11.2023
Diallo, Mounirou	Dakar, Senegal	29.04.2023 – 31.05.2023
Donko, Kamal	Parakou, Benin	15.06.2023 – 15.07.2023
Dramé, Mamour	Dakar, Senegal	27.05.2023 – 21.06.2023
El Maarouf, Driss	Marocco	01.08.2023 – 09.09.2023
Essel, Osuanyi Quaicoo	Ghana	12.06.2023 – 18.06.2023
Kacirek, Sven	Hamburg	19.06.2023 – 21.06.2023
McNamara, Thomas	Victoria, Australien	01.01.2023 – 25.02.2023
Nkrumah, Gertrude	Ghana	12.06.2023 – 18.06.2023
Nqueto, Adelle	Berlin	13.03.2023 – 27.03.2023
Olaoluwa, Senayon Sauwel	Ibadan, Nigeria	02.10.2023 – 31.10.2023
Tama, Clarisse	Parakou, Benin	26.10.2023 – 04.11.2023
Wangari, Grace	Nairobi	19.06.2023 – 21.06.2023
Yahaya, Mudi	Lagos, Nigeria	05.03.2023 – 22.04.2023
Yaro, Joseph Awetori	Accra, Ghana	09.10.2023 – 22.10.2023

## September

**02.09.2023 – Lecture: Mobilities and the Outlines of a Macro Sociology of (Contemporary) Africa** in Bayreuth  
Faisal Garba

**05.09.2023 – Seminar: Adoption of Residential Solar Photovoltaic Systems in South Africa – A Review of Barriers** in Makhanda  
Uzziah Mutumbi

**12.–14.09.2023 – Conference: SNSF Sinergia Project: African Contributions to Global Health in Abidjan**  
Margaret Gyapong, Matthew Harris, Kai Herzog, Julia Tischler

**13.09.2023 – Lecture: Powering Energy Transition through Corporate Financing: Examining Challenges and Opportunities for Africa's Indigenous Peoples** in Bayreuth  
Elifuraha Isaya Laltaika

**13.09.2023 – Lecture: Theoretical Reflections on the Influence of Sovereignty and Hegemonic Self-interest on Regional Economic Integration in Africa: A Comparative Study of the Achievements and Challenges of EAC and ECOWAS** in Lagos  
Paul Opondo

**20.09.2023 – Lecture: EACOP and Climate Change: African Resource Curse – Myth or Reality** in Bayreuth  
Bahame Tom Nyunduga



Cluster Conference 11.–14.10.2023



## October

**11.–14.10.2023 – Conference: Reconfiguring African Studies through Spatialities** in Bayreuth  
Epifania Amoo-Adare, Guillermo Antonio Navarro Alvarado, Judith Bachmann, Yacouba Banhor, Tanyitiku Enaka Agbor Bayee, Estefania Bournot, Orchid Patricia Daley, Mwazvita Dalu, Kerem Duymus, Katia Patricia de la Cruz Garcia, Kamal Donko, Muyiwa Falaiye, Emily M. Haber, Bruce Janz, Stella Kwami, Severine Marguin, Enocent Msindo, Camalita Naicker, Yusuf Patel, Peter Tirop Simatei, Köpke Sören, Tendayi Sithole, Boubacar Seydo Toure, Mbayoti Pheliwe Yvonne

**18.10.2023 – Lecture: Sociocultural Perspective to Individual Name Change and (Re)construction of Identity in Lagos** in Lagos  
Abisoye A. Eleshin

**24.–28.10.2023 – Conference: Program Point Sud 2023: Digital Transformation of Land Governance in Africa** in Accra  
Andrea Behrends, Lamine Doumbia, Peter Narh, Trung Thanh Nguyen

**23.–25.10.2023 – Film Screening and Discussion: Neptune Frost** in Bayreuth  
Renzo Baas, Tobias Lindemann, Thokozani Mhlambi, Aino Moongo

**25.10.2023 – Lecture: Transnational Relations in/of The Global South – Two Research Agendas** in Bayreuth  
Jana Hönke, Alexander Stroh-Steckelberg

**29.10.–02.11.2023 – Project: Human Rights, Corporate Social Responsibility and Interacting Markets in Africa** in Bayreuth  
Jörg Gundel, Thokozani Kaime, Bernd Kannowski, Franz Kogelmann, Elifuraha Isaya Laltaika, Juliana Masabo, Cecilia Ngaiza, Bahame Tom Mukirya Nyanduga, Robert Owino, Veronika Thalhammer

**25.-28.10.2023 Making (a) Difference Intergenerational Conversations on Intimate Relations and Transformation** in Bayreuth  
Erdmute Alber,, Serawit Debele, Melina Kalfelis, Susanne Lachenicht, Ulrike Schultz

## November

**07.–08.11.2023 – Workshop: Beyond the Digital Return: New Heritage 3 Series - Sustainability, and the Decolonisation of Music Archives in South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana** in Lagos  
Yinka Adeniji, Samuel A Jose, Seun Awobajo, Markus Coester, Bimbo Esho, Seyi Kenny, Grace Olaoluwa, Cornel-Best Onyekaba, Lee W. Watkins

**07.11.2023 – Seminar: Public Art Forms as Image and Cultural Identity of Indigenous Towns in Òkè-Ògùn Region of Òyó State, Nigeria.** in Makhanda  
Isaiah Ogunjimi

**07.11.2023 – Lecture: Lecture Series “African FeminismS Past and Present – Sex and the Politics of Pleasure”** in Bayreuth  
Serawit Debele, Naminata Diabate, Eddiong Charles Ibanga, Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah

**09.11.2023 – Lecture: Textuality, Transmediality, Materiality and/(in) African Studies in the age of Technology** in Bayreuth  
Olusola Babatunde Ope Davies

**15.11.2023 – Lecture: Towards a Philosophy of African Sonic Pedagogy: Some Insights from Transgressive Learning and Rhizome Model** in Bayreuth  
Anthony O. Okerege

**16.11.2023 – Lecture: Afro-Nostalgia: A Utopian Temporality** in Bayreuth  
Ferdinand de Jong

**23.–24.11.2023 – Inaugural Moi University International Conference on African Studies: Reflecting (on) Africa: Positionalities, Practices, and Products** in Eldoret  
Akinmayowa Paul Akin-Otiko, John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji, Austin Bukonya, Tanesha Gibbs, Catherine Jematia Kiprop, Kirimi Kiriamiti, Isaac Kosgey, Mary Lonyangapuo, Enocent Msindo, Simon Nganga, Christopher Joseph Odhiambo, Francis Owaka, Rüdiger Seesemann, Justine Mukhwana Sikuku, Benard Mwori Sorre, Constance Tenge, Mary Wahome, Luqman Ayodele Yusuf

**23.11.2023 – Seminar Series: “The Changing African Idea of Africa and the Future of African Studies”: Decoloniality: Negritude, Modernity, and the Future of African Studies** in Johannesburg and Bayreuth  
Cheick Thiam

**28.11.2023 – Colloquium: GIB Lecture Series: Spaces of War: From OSINT to “digital fieldwork”: How online investigation can “augment” geopolitical analysis and the study of conflicts** in Bayreuth  
Kevin Limonier

**29.11.2023 – Lecture: In defense of sovereignty: When history is stranded between law and fact** in Bayreuth  
Theodoros Rakopoulos

**30.11.2023 – Fellow Lecture: Towards an Epistemology of Craft** in Bayreuth  
Valerie Nur

December

05.12.2023 – Colloquium: GIB Lecture Series: Spaces of War: Geographies of war: the anatomies of later modern war in Bayreuth  
Derek Gregory

12.12.2023 – Colloquium: Lecture Series: Spaces of War: Refugees and war migrants as actors of urban changes in Bayreuth  
Valeria Lazarenko

14.12.2023 – Lecture: Fellow Lecture: The Involvement of Elderly Women in Traditional Male Cult and Festivals in Egba Land, Ogun State, Nigeria in Bayreuth  
Moses Yakubu

14.12.2023 – Lecture: Translation in Postcolonial Africa in Bayreuth  
Paul F. Bandia

20.12.2023 – Lecture: The graphic novel 'ANLU' in Bayreuth  
Carine Bahanag, Rose Ndengue

22.12.2023 – ICDL Round Table: African Masculinities in Bayreuth  
Gavaza Maluleke, Sabelo Mcinziba, Christabel Sam, Christine Vogt-William, Olajamuke Yacob-Hailiso



Impressions of the Cluster's 2023 events



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## The IAS Online Publication Series

The Institute of African Studies (IAS) promotes and coordinates the multi-disciplinary field of African Studies at the University of Bayreuth. The IAS publication series provide Bayreuth-based and visiting scholars with opportunities to publish their work on ongoing research and completed projects.

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The editor-in-chief is Dr. Malick Faye (IAS@uni-bayreuth.de).





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