

# ECAS 2025 - LIST OF PANELS

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## DISCIPLINARY STREAMS

### Anthropology

A Critical Look at Methodological Approaches to Exploring African Identities in Transformative Spaces

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Tosin Tunrayo Olonisakin (Germany) & Hanza Diman (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Transformative spaces for African identities are both virtual and physical and measurably impact self-definition and belongingness. This panel aims to discuss the different methods of analysing African identities in studies of migratory mobility on and beyond the African continent.

#### ABSTRACT

Identity preservation, (re)negotiation, adaptation, rejection and hybridity are all factors that have long structured the migratory mobility of Africans on a national, regional, continental and international scale. The more the world becomes globalised, physical borders become less of a barrier, digitalisation increases and inequalities and transnationalism are reinforced, the more complex it is to identify and define the meanings of African identities. Transformative spaces for African identities are both virtual and physical and measurably impact self-definition and belongingness. Exploring the complexity of African identities amid equally challenging socio-political landscapes requires identifying, adopting, and applying different methodological approaches that provide answers and are equally compatible with the subject. Therefore, a multidisciplinary analytical approach is imperative to explore the different methods used to study African identities in various mobility spaces. This panel aims to provide a framework for discussing the different methods of analysing African identities in studies of migratory mobility on and beyond the African continent. The objective is to place the methodological approach at the heart of the debate to rethink, contextualise and challenge past and current narratives on issues related to identities, their transformation and reinvention in African migratory mobilities in a broader framework. Priority will be given to innovative perspectives from historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and all other disciplines not mentioned here, in which case studies and comparative analyses will help to broaden our understanding of the subject matter.

### Africa's changing health landscapes: struggles and possibilities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Julie Soleil Archambault (Canada) & Tyler Zoanni (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel reflects on changing health landscapes in Africa and its diasporas and examines long-standing processes of medicalization and the emergence of new transnational imaginaries of wellbeing, foregrounding the possibilities and limits of shifting visions of the embodied good life from Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

Africa is undergoing what global health observers describe as an "epidemiological transition", as "non-communicable diseases" that were once mainly found in industrialized nations increasingly afflict communities across the global South. These transformations unfold on the backdrop of colonial figurations of Africa as a place of affliction and suffering, tropes which continue to play out with recent outbreaks, and global public health and humanitarian interventions.

This panel invites new thinking about health and wellbeing in Africa and its diasporas, heeding calls to provide "other stories" about health and health-seeking. We are interested in examining the construction/production/representation of changing health landscapes through processes of medicalization, pathologization, and intervention, and the emergence of new transnational imaginaries and practices of lifestyle, fitness, and medical consumption. We invite papers that attend to how wellbeing practices figure in shifting expectations about the good life and desirable futures.

We ask how globally circulating ideas about health are received, performed, and contested in different African, Afropean, and Afropolitan contexts. What happens to the meaning and experience of suffering and flourishing in the face of normative conceptions of wellbeing, health, and illness promoted through neoliberal agendas? What insights might we gain by theorizing "health" from Africa and what does doing so entail and generate methodologically and epistemologically? We thus attend to what "new" health conditions produce in terms of challenges but also possibilities while bringing into focus African and Afropolitan realities and entanglements that tend to be overshadowed by health agendas developed elsewhere.

*Sponsored by the journal AFRICA.*

## African Political Cultures

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Georg Klute (Germany) & Dereje Dori (Ethiopia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel wants to examine and compare the political cultures of different African countries, south as well as north of the Sahara. It assumes that political culture is key to understand processes of creativity and adaptation in dealing with Afropolitan belongings and political orders.

### ABSTRACT

Africa is a continent where creative dealing with afropolitan belongings and political orders is omnipresent. Political culture is a key to understand and to explain the processes of creativity and adaptation in dealing with political orders. It includes political actions, institutional arrangements, discourses, rituals, symbols, and 'basic narratives' as significations of political cultures and their dynamics. Power, legitimacy, and violence are at the core of political culture. Looking into these dimensions, the panel wants to examine and compare the political cultures of different African countries, south as well as north of the Sahara. It is obvious that African countries differ along the lines of the power of the state, the presence of 'heterarchical figurations', the role and meaning of violence, magic, witchcraft, codes and institutions of conflict resolution, and the kind of leaders and power groups, from state governments, warlords to chiefdoms, that shape political cultures. The overall aim of the panel is on the one hand, to make a valuable contribution to the analysis of contemporary politics in Africa and on the other hand, to contribute to the development of the concept and general theory of political culture from an anthropological and sociological perspective.

### African ways of dwelling in Europe: A conversation across housing pathways and home cultures

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Paolo Boccagni (Italy) & Aïssatou Mbodj-Pouye (France)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Dwelling is a privileged field for the interplay between African, Afropolitan and Afropean ways of being and belonging. Our session invites a fieldwork-based conversation on housing and home (un)making, and the underlying constellations of domesticity and inequality, in the Euro-African diaspora.

#### ABSTRACT

How is it that men and women with an African background make themselves at home across Europe? What do their housing trajectories and conditions tell about their social position, cultural backgrounds, and (over)exposure to inequality and discrimination?

Drawing also on our recent ethnographies of shared housing among African men in France (Mbodj-Pouye, 2023) and in Italy (Boccagni, forthcoming), we interrogate (in)formal ways of dwelling as a source of systemic insight on the mainstream society and on diasporic ties with African cities, communities, and families. The session aims to cut across the political economy of housing and home ownership, local and transnational, with the associated patterns of urbanization and marginalization, and the biographical approaches to housing pathways and ways of dwelling, as articulations of preexisting domestic cultures and ways of conviviality that change and are re-adapted over time. We welcome fieldwork-based papers that attend to inner diversities and inequalities among individuals and families from Africa, or with an African background, in gender, age, generation, legal status and class, as much as ethnic and religious background.

Overall, the session is meant to open African studies to fruitful conversation with fields like housing/urban studies, everyday multiculturalism, material culture, and the study of home as a space to reconstruct personal and collective stories of migration, (un)belonging, and diasporic heritage and legacy. What accounts - we eventually ask - for "African", "Afropolitan" or "Afropean" modes of being to emerge from the lived and shared experience of home across Europe?

## African women of power: producing sociality and belonging in transnational contexts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Anaïs Ménard (Belgium) & Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Drawing on scholarship that focuses on African women's central role in processes of international mobility, this panel explores the ways women produce sociality and create webs of belonging that allow them to challenge gender norms and build power in their societies of origin and of migration.

### ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship regarding African migration explores economic rationales and social aspirations driving international mobilities, but frequently remains gender-blind, overwhelmingly depicting African migrants as young men, often illegalized. Otherwise nuanced scholars have reproduced clichés of powerlessness about African women who migrate, emphasizing how gender hierarchies—such as dependence on family reunification—render women vulnerable, constrained in their socioeconomic choices. Gender, however, remains a key factor of sociality that allows women in migratory situations to build webs of belonging, through which they exercise their agency in shaping transnational mobilities, providing care, creating socioeconomic opportunities, and taking up leadership roles in their diasporic neighbourhoods. These networks provide a common basis for African women to challenge gender norms. This panel focuses on the ways African women build gendered forms of belonging (both through face-to-face and online exchanges), and thereby, challenge gender patterns and re-configure notions of power in their societies of origin and of migration. The panel emphasizes women's autonomous (if embedded) trajectories, as central actors of their own migration. It contextualizes women in their national histories and post-immigration contexts and challenges narratives of disempowerment by investigating how women create their own networks by drawing on certain forms of social, economic and emotional connections that allow them to deploy African imaginaries of power in contexts of migration. The panel invites papers that explore diverse types of gender-based sociality, by which women produce connections, mobilize female-based networks, build socioeconomic pathways for themselves, achieve status and recognition, and circumvent or use gender norms in their own interests.

## African Youth Transitions: Imagining Futures amidst Climate Crisis and Shifting Im/Mobility Options [AMMODI]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Tekalign Ayalew (Ethiopia) & Ninna Nyberg Sørensen (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how African youth navigate im/mobility in response to intensifying environmental change. It examines how configurations of climate crises, poverty, unemployment or insecurity shape youth transitions, mobility aspirations, practices and belonging amidst restricted options.

### ABSTRACT

Communities worldwide face new challenges due to unprecedented and intensifying climate change related disasters as environmental conditions deteriorate and exaggerate existing inequalities. Across Africa and its diasporas, these shifts are profoundly altering the lives of young people, who find themselves at the crossroads of forced immobility or new forms of movement and belonging. Some are trapped in place by worsening conditions, while others may seek to relocate to old and new destinations as a proactive response.

This panel delves into how African youth across diverse localities and circumstances navigate and respond to the slow and rapid onset environmental crises, particularly through the lens of (im)mobility. It seeks to explore how young African women and men experience, talk about, and actively engage with climate change and its impacts, as well as how it affects their sense of place in the world and belonging. The panel also examines how climate change intertwines with other pressing challenges—such as poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, conflict, and gender-based violence—shaping the aspirations and capabilities for mobility, as well as changing migration patterns and trends.

The panel will consider how such complex entanglements are influenced by climate governance and evolving migration and refugee policies at national, regional, and international levels, creating new hierarchies and dynamics in mobility. The panel welcomes papers focusing on African youth mobility to, within, or between towns and cities, across regional and international state borders, and return movements to real or imagined homelands.

### African, Afropolitan and Afropean belongings through the lens of Student Mobilities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Dragani Amalia (France) & Waldegiorgis Tadesse Emnet (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the connections between student mobilities and African, Afropolitan, Afropean belongings. We invite contributions that interrogate the multiple and hybrid identities of international students and highly trained African professionals in interconnected and globalized worlds.

#### ABSTRACT

In this panel, we invite contributions that explore the connections between student mobilities and African, Afropolitan, Afropean belongings. In a knowledge-based world the number of higher-education students learning outside their countries of origin is expected to rise to 22,000,000 by 2027 (Kigotho 2020). In particular, the internationalisation of African higher education is crucial for repositioning Africa for economic growth. Thus African students increasingly cross the borders in search of knowledge in another country for acquiring global skills and languages and becoming highly trained African professionals. We welcome contributions that explore the multiple and hybrid identities of international students and professionals in interconnected and globalized worlds. We are looking for contributors with reflexive attitudes grounded in empirical experiences who will engage with their own research processes, while also interrogating the assumptions and power relations embedded in the politics of knowledge production.

Here are some of the questions that could be addressed. How do the graduated students navigate between the transformation of the Self as a creative individual process and their African belongings? Which are the effects of mobility? How established local élites not trained abroad react to international élites? How corporal transformation as well as change in dress and the acquisition of the rules of Global-North sexuality, such as monogamy, impact family life and Afropolitan and Afropean belongings? How to engage with the interrelated dimensions of methodological, epistemological and theoretical challenges of conducting research on student mobilities for scholars trained abroad or not?



## Behind the Scenes: Disclosing Assistant-Researcher Relations in Long-Term Fieldwork

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Hauke-Peter Vehrs (Germany) & Richard Kiaka (Kenya)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Research assistants are an integral part of ethnographic fieldwork, yet their contributions are often under- or unrepresented in academic outputs. We critically discuss how researcher-assistant relationships develop and what roles research assistants take on beyond their academic engagement.

### ABSTRACT

In ongoing debates about the decolonisation of science and the search for symmetrical relations between the Global South and North, much attention is paid to academic collaborations. In this panel, we want to shift the focus of scholarly research beyond the level of academic partnerships and turn to the professional and personal relationships established with research assistants during and after fieldwork.

Long-term fieldwork in particular relies heavily on the collaboration with research assistants, who support various aspects of our work, including language translation, research coordination and networking, among other tasks and routines. Despite their integral roles, assistants are often absent from publications and communications, and in our panel we seek to highlight and explore the contributions of research assistants and reflect on the nature of these partnerships.

The guiding questions for our panel discussion are:

- How do researcher-assistant relationships develop and evolve?
- What is the role of research assistants in long-term fieldwork?
- How does fieldwork affect the lives and careers of research assistants?
- What challenges and opportunities arise from these collaborations?
- How does assistant-researcher collaboration continue after fieldwork, and what are the long-term benefits or prospects for our assistants?
- How do assistants perceive their work and what could we rethink to improve these relationships?
- How can the role of research assistants be valued and made visible in our academic work?

## Belonging in Times of Precarity: Navigating Everyday Social Protection and Environmental Change in African Communities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Yeshtila Wondemeneh (Ethiopia) & Ida Marie Savio Vammen (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Exploring the intersection of climate change and social protection in Africa, this panel examines how social support systems and local practices rooted in family, social, ethnic, and religious ties, provide vital support. We seek to understand their role in (re)shaping belonging and (im)mobility.

### ABSTRACT

In response to growing food insecurity and climate-related precarity, African states and international donors are implementing various state-led social protection programs across rural and urban areas of the continent. However, large parts of the population are not reached or excluded from these formal mechanisms, relying instead on everyday social protection systems. These systems—rooted in extended family networks, as well as social, ethnic, and religious obligations—provide essential support infrastructures during times of crisis. While recent scholarship has illuminated the significance of everyday humanitarianism and diaspora humanitarianism, this panel seeks to delve deeper into the intersection of slow and rapid onset environmental changes and locally practiced social protection infrastructures. We aim to explore how climate change and prolonged precarity affect locally embedded and often long-held protection mechanisms for individuals and families within their communities and for people on the move. We invite papers that examine:

1. The diverse ways community-based support systems offer critical social protection during climate-induced shocks, and the emotional and material support they provide.
2. The friction and transformations of support systems when vital resources become scarce.
3. How local and state lead mechanisms differ or mirror each other when it comes to the inclusion and exclusion of access?

Furthermore, we seek to understand how these social protection mechanisms—or the lack thereof—influence people's sense of belonging and patterns of (im)mobility. We are thus seeking to explore the complex expressions and changes in African sociality and care in the context of climate change.

## Care in and out of Central Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Lys Alcayna-Stevens (United Kingdom) & Clara Devlieger (Switzerland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines how everyday care practices are entangled within broader histories of migration, colonialism, and global health regimes, exploring the ways in which these entanglements are experienced, contested, and transformed in Central Africa and among its diasporas.

### ABSTRACT

Care, both as a concept and a practice, is deeply embedded in everyday life in Central Africa. From the intimate acts of caregiving during pregnancy and illness to communal rites surrounding funerals, and the shared experience of food or prayer, care manifests through sensory and affective engagements that shape family and communal bonds. These practices are entangled within broader histories of migration, colonialism, and global health regimes. This panel interrogates how these entanglements are experienced, contested, and transformed in Central Africa and among its diasporas.

By bringing together scholars working at the intersection of care, senses, affect, and health, we explore questions such as: How is care negotiated in settings of state neglect? What do the tensions between patients and practitioners, and between biomedical protocols and everyday care practices, show about the entanglement of care with power, inequality, and governance? How do they reproduce inequalities or serve as sites of resistance against neoliberalism and biopolitical control? Who are the new providers and recipients of care, and under what conditions does care become politicised?

Changing care arrangements highlight intersections of political economy, embodied experience, and everyday practice. How does care bring moral and political economies together? How is care felt, sensed, and enacted in various contexts, from healthcare settings to domestic spaces? How does care extend beyond humans to include animals, plants, ecosystems, and ancestors - expanding the notion of what constitutes community and kinship and blurring the binary of care-giver and recipient?

## Contested Borderland, Connective Heartland: The Multiple Trajectories of Ethiopia's Somali Region Within the Broader Horn [CRG- ABORNE]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Daniel K. Thompson (United States) & Juweria Ali (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel investigates the interplay of conflict and connection in the Ethiopia-Somalia borderlands, focusing on the ongoing transformation of Ethiopia's Somali Regional State from contested conflict zone to a site of diaspora-return migration, cultural renewal, and economic connectivity.

### ABSTRACT

This panel invites contributions that assess the historical and contemporary interaction between conflict and connection in the Somali-inhabited Horn of Africa, with a focus on the multiple socio-economic and political trajectories evident in Ethiopia's Somali Regional State (SRS, also often referred to as the Ogaden). SRS has undergone a major, if contested and precarious, transformation over the past decade from a "no-go" conflict zone to one of Ethiopia's most stable regions and a frontier of investment and return-migration for the global Somali diaspora. Yet conflict and connection are not mutually exclusive. We seek papers that investigate the multiple lineages and trajectories of today's political, economic, social, and cultural transformation. We welcome contributions that elucidate historical trends, contemporary changes, and future possibilities for life, politics, trade, and culture-making in the Ethiopia-Somalia Borderlands.

### Crafting New Knowledge: Autoethnography and Creative Expression in African Studies

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Nauja Kleist (Denmark) & Pamela Kea (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines how autoethnography and creative expression in African studies challenge traditional knowledge hierarchies. It explores the freedoms, dilemmas, and constraints when weaving one's story and artistic engagement into the scholarship about African and Afropean life worlds.

Panel will be sponsored by the journal Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

Autoethnography and experimental modes of scholarship, such as fiction, poetry, and various creative expressions, continue to innovate contemporary research. The movement between personal experiences and cultural and social contexts has the potential to produce new forms of reflexive knowledge. This panel engages with the implications of these methodologies within the context of African studies, reflecting on the potentials and dilemmas for scholarship.

We will explore the implications of blending personal narrative and creative expressions with academic analysis, asking: What freedoms and challenges arise when researchers weave their own stories or their own or other's creative expressions into their work? What imaginaries, emotions, and experiences can be expressed and explored? What ethical dilemmas arise from these modes of inquiry? What transgressive forms of knowledge might be produced? And how can such methodologies contribute to a nuanced examination of present and historical African, Afropean, and Afropolitan life worlds, entanglements, identities, and belongings?

The panel offers a platform to reflect on these questions and the multifaceted impacts of personal backgrounds and of weaving academic and creative expressions together in our knowledge production. We invite contributions from scholars who critically engage with African and Afropean contexts through personal narratives and/or different aesthetic forms and collaborations. Creative and artistic formats are welcome!

## Cryptopolitics, Belonging, and Migration

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Katrien Pype (Belgium) & Victoria Bernal (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Examines cryptopolitics in relation to identities, belonging, and diaspora relationships. ‘Cryptopolitics,’ draws attention to the significance of hidden information, double meanings, and the processes of encoding and decoding messages in negotiations of power relations.

### ABSTRACT

This panel builds on a double panel organized at ECAS 2019 where we experimented with the concept of cryptopolitics as related to power and digital media. This resulted in an OA book “Cryptopolitics: Exposure, Concealment, and Digital Media” (Bernal et al. 2023). Now we plan to examine the cryptopolitics at work in relation to identities, belonging, and diaspora relationships. ‘Cryptopolitics,’ draws attention to the significance of hidden information, double meanings, double-crossing, and the constant processes of encoding and decoding messages in negotiations of power relations. Opacity, ambiguity, and strategically sharing partial truths or even deceit are practices deployed by individuals and institutions alike. In diaspora relationships, migrants, as well as their relatives who have remained at home, and others on the move, mobilize various forms of concealing and hiding vis-à-vis one another. Cryptopolitical agency is also enacted by institutions who determine a migrant’s right to remain on the territory, to obtain legal status, and thus expand or narrow a migrant’s possible future. These communications involve calculated or intuitive risk taking, often connected to protecting or securing relationships, opportunities, and resources. How are such negotiations shaped by unequal transnational regimes of location, mobility and belonging? What does cryptopolitics reveal about the shifting frontiers of contestation over identity and belonging in diverse African contexts? We are particularly interested in ethnographic explorations into the entanglements of mobility, belonging, and cryptopolitical agency as they play out in social worlds, but also in relation to political institutions, offline and/or online.

## Decolonizing African Studies: Navigating Eurocentric Curricula and Grassroots Realities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Elvis Baneomuleng Botah (Ghana) & Lydia Amoah (Ghana)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel discusses how knowledge production is affected by how scholars of African Studies engage with Eurocentric curricula while connecting them to the grassroots-based research that they do.

### ABSTRACT

In this panel, we make the case that the history of research on Africa has been associated for centuries with findings that are prejudiced and Eurocentric and that these findings do not always accurately reflect African realities. The scholarly landscape is still unbalanced after decades of studies on African soil between more recent works like Nyamnjoh and Gyekye and older works like Fortes and Evans-Pritchard. Journals, conferences, and African Studies associations like ASA and ECAS still exist and are mostly run in the Global South. There is no denying that this framework supports hegemony and an unfair playing field for academics with African roots. We contend that these connections, which are based outside of Africa, not only hinder the global dissemination of knowledge rooted in Africa but also prevent early researchers from sharing their findings. Therefore, we pose the following queries: How can African researchers living on the continent help us understand contemporary African cultural, social, and political dynamics? How do African-based scholars come up with and create knowledge that is meant for consumption outside of Africa? How can African students' research findings and expertise contribute to the prevailing Eurocentric paradigm that they are taught in their curriculum and are familiar with? How do we create information that is authentic to ourselves, that strengthens the position of the African scholar, and that demonstrates the richness and uniqueness of African identities, cultures, and languages? In what ways may African knowledge be harnessed to effectuate the necessary transformation of the continent?

## Embodying Africanness on Social Media Platforms

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Tom Simmert (Germany) & Izuu Nwankwọ (Canada)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Our panel focusses on bodies as mediators for the commodification and distribution of African and Afro-diasporic cultural practices on social media platforms.

### ABSTRACT

Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitch have seen steadily increasing users, growing their earnings and indispensability to the global economy. With their focus on image (and video) production and their significance as sites for the global dissemination of cultural productions, users act as cultural mediators whose creations transform popular cultural artefacts into viral trends and memes. Many African and Afro-diasporic genres have recently benefitted from this, e.g. through dance challenges for Afrobeats and amapiano, or videos that lip-sync skits by popular comedians. Thanks to the affordance of creative editing, multitudinous representations of Africanness related to a variety of racialized, gendered and otherwise classified bodies, voices and performances emerge from this process. It is however noteworthy that these platforms commodify the bodies of their users, both as aesthetic objects and as agents for the circulation of other products, just as Merzenich's (2021) observation that starting from "being sold as a commodity to being used to sell commodities, the exploitation of the Black body has been the backbone of Western civilization." Based on these thoughts, our panel is interested in the performative and embodied aspects of social media content making, such as talking and singing, lip-syncing and dancing, fitness, fashion and make-up, among others. We therefore seek paper contributions concerned with but not limited to considerations of how digital creators navigate the commodification of their bodies in networked audio-visual media and how they negotiate body-related categories like race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and age in this process.



## Ethics versus real-life: Navigating in complex research fields

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** An Ansoms (Belgium) & Amanda Møller Rasmussen (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel discusses ethical challenges in doing research in complex (African) research fields. It specifically focuses upon how profound dilemmas and perceived 'failures' of ethical ideals shape researchers' pathways in knowledge production.

### ABSTRACT

The positionality of the researcher is determined by epistemological and methodological orientations, ethical choices, and emotional engagement. While navigating 'in the field', researchers' positionality continuously shifts. When working in complex research zones or with vulnerable population groups, there is however an increased chance of encountering critical incidents during which profound dilemmas at the crossroads between epistemology, ethics, and emotionality arise. This panel analyses whether and how these dilemmas – and researchers' strategies in response – redefine the research project, and how this in turn reshapes the process of knowledge production.

We are looking for papers that explore how researchers, who faced significant ethical challenges profoundly, questioned and adapted their research strategies. We provide a constructive space for discussing how failure may provide a source of inspiration and may open up new pathways. We specifically invite researchers whose positionality in research combines professional and personal dynamics, for example in doing research 'at home', or in combining research and activism.

## Exploring Entanglements in Material Remains of Post(colonial) Development Interventions in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Janine Haëbel (the Netherlands) & Carla Bertin (Portugal)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Following the conclusion of (post)colonial development interventions in Africa, a profusion of material artefacts is often left behind. We welcome papers exploring how development remnants offer new insights into subject-object relations and reveal other forms of human and non-human entanglement.

### ABSTRACT

In African contexts, following the formal conclusion of colonial and postcolonial development interventions, a profusion of material artefacts, such as agricultural tools or parts of industrial machinery, is often left behind without maintenance, leading to breakdowns and decay. While these materials may seem like little more than discarded remnants of something that no longer exists, people on the ground often keep, dismantle, and repurpose them for uses other than those originally intended.

Scholars have shown that objects possess agency, either endowed by the intentions of their creators or through their inherent capacity to act as non-human agents. Studies of material culture have questioned the division between object and subject, revealing their mutual co-constitution. We propose that the study of decaying materials not only offers new insights into subject-object relationships, but also illuminates other forms of entanglements. Firstly, development materials embody entanglements of international colonial and postcolonial relations (Thomas 1991). Such materials can reflect Africa's historical position within networks of (post)colonial power, while also advancing local claims for new connections in the global socio-cultural order (Ferguson 2006). Secondly, over time, ecological processes of decay and renewal (deSilvey 2006), such as dust and rust, contribute to the ongoing transformations of such leftovers and reveal the activity of other non-human forces.

This panel invites papers that explore the entanglements inscribed and produced by development material remnants across Africa. We welcome contributions that examine their dynamic role in shaping contemporary lives, through diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, including ethnography and visual methods.

### Exploring Multiple Realities, Histories and Trajectories of Cancer in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Marit Østebø (United States) & M. Yunus Rafiq (China)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores interdisciplinary research on cancer in Africa, inviting scholars and practitioners to examine how cancer is understood, treated, and experienced across diverse cultural, historical, and geopolitical settings. We welcome papers from both scholars and practitioners.

#### ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, epidemiologists and global health experts have framed cancer in Africa as a fast-growing epidemic requiring urgent attention. This framing has led to increased investments in cancer treatment across the continent: national cancer control plans have been implemented, modern cancer-care centers established, and new transnational public-private partnerships formed to enhance local expertise and capacity. However, access to cancer-related technologies and treatments remains profoundly uneven, shaped by enduring structural inequalities and the complexities of global health policies.

This panel seeks to deepen interdisciplinary social-science research on cancer in African contexts by exploring how cancer is understood, treated, and experienced across diverse cultural, historical, and geopolitical settings. We welcome papers from both scholars and practitioners—especially those from Africa—who are on the front lines of delivering care and navigating issues such as access to medicines, resource shortages, and challenging healthcare landscapes. In particular, we seek to challenge the divide between theory and practice by including those who not only deliver care but are also deeply engaged in discussions of policy and theoretical frameworks. We invite contributions that examine how cancer care infrastructures challenge or reproduce inequalities, and how African, Afropolitan, and Afropean modes of belonging intersect with cancer care. By incorporating diverse perspectives and emphasizing the entanglements of identity, belonging, and positionality this panel aims to situate cancer care within broader struggles over global power, mobility, and knowledge production, making visible the intersections of health, identity, and politics in African contexts.

### Governing aspirations, livelihoods, and belonging in the “post-work” era

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Leonie Hoffmann (United Kingdom) & Julia Hampton (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the governance of aspirations, livelihoods, and belonging “after work”. Have states retreated from seeking to govern people as “workers”? If so, what governing institutions and categories have replaced them, and how do people navigate them amidst diverse strategies of getting by?

#### ABSTRACT

Institutional attempts to shape African workforces have a long history. Governing people as “labour” has often meant restricting access to alternative livelihoods and shaping structures of material rewards around employment, whether wages or welfare. It has also meant shaping attitudes and subjectivities, including by framing a normative discourse around work and linking social recognition to professional identities and attachments.

Presently, waged work seems on the decline. What are the categories – new and old – that shape the governance of aspiration, livelihoods, and belonging today, and how are they mobilised? Drawing on concepts such as ‘work-seekers’, ‘entrepreneurs’, or ‘volunteers’, state and non-state institutions alike offer recognition, attachment, and material benefits, even as they criminalise or ignore other livelihood strategies.

How do people navigate those categories as they encounter them discursively and through formal processes? What happens when official categories chafe against wider social significations, aspirations, and commitments? A large literature has documented the diverse, piecemeal and distributive livelihoods that enable people to get by, albeit precariously, without employment. However, the relationship between livelihoods, social identities, and aspirations, on the one hand, and formal categories of governance, on the other, remains underexplored. This panel aims to advance our understanding of this relationship.

We invite papers that examine governance through (post)work categories and welcome contributions both from a conceptual and/or empirically driven perspective. Papers could focus on discursive aspects of governance or explore the social life of categories, for example by investigating bureaucratic or administrative processes of categorisation and attendant encounters.

### Green Dreams, Toxic Legacies: The Complexities of Green Energy Development in the semi-arid region of South Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Stephanie Borchardt (South Africa) & Katrina Lehmann-Grube (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the political dimensions of green energy in South Africa's semi-arid region, focusing on land justice, energy transitions, and socio-political dynamics. It examines injustices in distribution, procedure, and recognition, with a focus on green extractivism, mining, and renewable projects in the Northern Cape.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel delves into the political dimensions of green energy development in South Africa's semi-arid Northern Cape region, with a focus on land justice, energy transitions, and socio-political dynamics. It examines potential injustices across distributive, procedural, cosmopolitan, and recognition dimensions, particularly the far-reaching impacts of green extractivism on local communities and their environments. Central to the discussion are key developments in copper mining, solar and wind energy projects, and green hydrogen production in a region historically shaped by mining's boom-and-bust cycles. These cycles, which have led to significant environmental degradation and social upheaval, raise concerns about repeating historical mistakes as the area now experiences a green energy boom driven by renewed interest in copper mining and renewable energy production. Despite its successes, South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REI4P) has faced criticism for marginalising local government and residents and concentrating benefits among foreign companies. This has left many local communities vulnerable to socio-economic instability and often excluded from the green energy transition's benefits. The panel draws on an analysis of green extractivism's impact on transition pathways, incorporating concepts such as 'green colonialism' and 'energy colonialism' to address land dispossession and socio-economic inequality. By applying Dillman and Heinonen's (2022) normative energy justice framework, the panel investigates how energy transitions may perpetuate or alleviate historical and contemporary injustices. This highlights the urgent need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to land use, and equity in the expansion of green energy projects.

## Hazardous Flows: Technology, Creativity and Risk on Africa's Rivers

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Peter Lambertz (Belgium) & Simon Marijsse (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel focuses on the human use of and technological engagement with water and waterways in an effort to harness their forces for mobility, transport, mining and infrastructure in past and present Africa.

### ABSTRACT

In times of population growth and rapid urbanization, it is certain that the use of water and water bodies for transport, mining, irrigation and other economic activities will continue to increase. As demonstrated by the use of Chinese *Chang Fa* engines for underwater mining and the propulsion of the DR Congo's *baleinière* river-boats, this entails trends towards frugal mechanization and technical creativity to harness the forces of flowing water. However, as the frequency of accidents attests, the unpredictability of these forces, both visible and invisible, harbours a considerable degree of danger.

Transport and mobility, mining, trade and agriculture are often studied as land-based phenomena. Meanwhile, water bodies are often studied as ecosystems rather than anthropocenic technoscapes of economic utility and exploitation. A focus on waterways, water-bodies and the hazardous nature of working on them invites for fresh insights for the study of infrastructure, agriculture, transport and mobility, as well as extractive practices that involve socio-technical creativity in often changing environments.

The panel focuses on longstanding, but also on more recent ways of kinetic engagement with Africa's waters, as sites of transport, connectivity and exchange, as well as for mineral exploitation, irrigation, etc. Here skills, knowledge, technologies, logistics and infrastructures, both traditional and modern, artisanal and industrial, are passed-on, nurtured, transformed, developed and innovated upon, also with a view to countering the dangers of waterborne activities. We invite contributions on water-related technologies and infrastructure (navigation, propulsion, boat building, mining, irrigation, bridge building, dams, urban waters, etc.) or other related topics.

### Identity and Belonging: Navigating Africanness in North African Societies

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Matri Khaoula (Tunisia) & Asma Ben Hadj Hassen (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This multidisciplinary panel discusses identity construction in North Africa, focusing on Africanness and blackness. It welcomes contributions in French, English, and Arabic that critically explore the experiences of citizenship, belonging, and racialisation in North African societies.

#### ABSTRACT

This multidisciplinary panel examines the multiple facets of the discourses that produce models of identity in North Africa, particularly on the construction of Africanness and blackness in North African societies and the issues that shape the imaginaries, representations and experiences of such construction at different scales. The complex intersections of the components of such an identity - from blackness to whiteness, from religious and cultural rituals in Islam to linguistic and artistic expressions - are the concrete and symbolic expressions of a classificatory model of belonging and exclusion. The socio-political dynamics of the post-2011 era and the current and past inter-African mobility have brought the issue of identity to the forefront of political and public debate to recognise marginalised cultural, linguistic and religious identities. The political reopening of this question and the constant redefinition of belonging at different historical moments testify to a complexity that keeps this region in a complicated situation, considered a liminal space, a place of connections, discontinuities, transformations, ruptures and interactions. The proposed contributions will, therefore, focus on the production of academic and common knowledge in this region of the continent and will address the different facets of the construction of Africanness. Several nuances will be explored, reflecting on the impact of European colonialism, issues of nation-state construction, economic models and political regimes in place. This panel welcomes contributions in French, English, and Arabic that critically explore the experiences of citizenship, belonging, and racialisation faced by different social categories in North Africa.

## Indigenous eco-politics: the intersection of identity, belonging and environmentalism in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Léa Lacan (Germany) & Emmanuel Sulle (Tanzania)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores how Indigenous eco-politics emerge at the intersection of indigeneity, politics of belonging and environmentalism. It asks how local conservation initiatives draw on, produce or reinvent belonging, and how to achieve environmental justice for and with local and Indigenous people.

### ABSTRACT

In recent years, African Indigenous Peoples and local communities have been campaigning for land tenure security and environmental justice. Activists of the Kenyan Ogiek, Sengwer and Endorois, the Botswanan and Namibian San, Bayei and Himba, and the Tanzanian Maasai and Hadza (among many others) have used arguments of indigeneity, belonging, and cultural identities to reclaim their rights to land and natural resources and to negotiate a political voice against governmental projects and land grabs by private companies. A core assumption of these arguments is that indigenous and/or local worldviews and practices of environmental care promise more effective conservation. These local struggles resonate at the international level, where activists from the Global North and Indigenous groups connect to advocate for indigenous environmentalism.

This panel explores these indigenous eco-politics. It collects cases where identity politics rooted in culturally and socially deeply embedded forms of belonging intersect with environmental politics supported by global environmentalist and human rights campaigns. It asks what elements of indigeneity, belonging and cultural identity motivate claims over land, natural resources and their management, and how indigenous or local environmentalist initiatives mobilize and reinvent belonging. All contributions reflect on how to achieve environmental justice for and with Indigenous and local communities in a world progressively beset by global ecological crises, growing inequalities and fragmented governmentality. In the 2020s, the strong linkages between climate change and biodiversity loss, global environmental governance, and the rapid financialization of conservation renew the urgency to consider indigenous eco-politics and address questions of environmental justice.



## Information Warfare and Strategic Resources in the Sahel: Global Rivalries and Local Impacts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Almamy Sylla (Mali) & Signe Cold-Ravnkilde (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how the spread of mis- and disinformation intersect with global power competition and local access to strategic resources in the Sahel.

### ABSTRACT

The Sahel region, rich in strategic resources such as minerals and energy reserves, is increasingly becoming a battleground for global power rivalry. At the same time, the region has seen an acceleration of mis- and disinformation spread on social media platforms (Sylla and Cold-Ravnkilde 2024). Beyond traditional conflicts, state and non-state actors use misinformation and disinformation as powerful tools to influence control over strategic resources. This panel explores how the spread of mis- and disinformation intersect with global power competition and local access to strategic resources in the Sahel. We invite papers to reflect on the epistemological and ontological impacts of information warfare addressing these themes:

- The role of mis- and disinformation in shaping narratives and influencing control over strategic resources in the Sahel, including by global powers.
- Case studies of how mis- and disinformation campaigns have affected local populations' access to resources and disrupted regional stability.
- The implications of mis- and disinformation for national sovereignty, governance, and economic development in the Sahel.
- Strategies employed by Sahelian states and regional organizations to counter mis- and disinformation and safeguard equitable access to resources.

The panel invites scholars in African studies, Anthropology, Geography and Political Science to discuss how mis- and disinformation affect global rivalries, with profound implications for local communities. We encourage contributions that offer both theoretical analysis and empirical evidence to deepen our understanding of this critical issue.

### Insider/Outsider: Identity and Belonging in African Fieldwork Encounters

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Esma Karadag (South Africa) & Mayke Kaag (the Netherlands)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to investigate the complex dynamics of insider-outsider positionality in research among African communities, focusing on how historical, cultural and geopolitical contexts influence the relationship between researchers and participants, as well as the broader production of knowledge.

#### ABSTRACT

In this panel, we reflect on the workings, sensitivities, and ethical questions around identity (politics) and belonging in our own research practice, by focusing on the complex dynamics of insider-outsider positionality.

While shared affiliations or connections can provide valuable entry points into a community, stark differences in ethnicity, language, or lived experience often highlight the researcher's outsider status. This distinction may be evident through communication cues such as accents or names, which can immediately mark differences and, as a consequence, install feelings of distrust. However, the outsider position may also offer unique advantages, allowing researchers to navigate certain discussions with relative neutrality/distance from entrenched socio-political contexts, which may - perhaps paradoxically- foster feelings of trust.

Rather than positioning researchers strictly as either insiders or outsiders, however, we particularly aim to explore how both roles are often navigated simultaneously by researchers and research participants alike. In the research encounter, how do they play with aspects of their own identity and their perception of the other in order to make the connection work, or inversely, sabotage it? Which sensitivities around belonging does each bring? What culturally informed criteria for being an insider or an outsider play a role? How do these influence processes of trust and distrust between researchers and their research collaborators? And how does this impact on knowledge formation?

By investigating these and related questions, this panel offers a space to discuss identity, identification processes, and the fluidity of positionality in fieldwork, including the emotional and ethical issues involved.

## Judicializing the ‘new threats’. African courts facing transnational issues

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Sophie Andretta (Belgium) & Pauline Jarroux (Belgium)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Through the judicialization of ‘new threats’, this panel aims to reflect on the way African judiciaries deal with new norms and tackle global stakes. It will also contribute to wider scholarship on the place of African courts in global politics.

### ABSTRACT

Trafficking in drugs, human beings and weapons, money laundering, financial crime, illicit exploitation of natural resources and armed violence have been happening for (more than) decades, both on the African continent and worldwide. Yet, due to what is considered as its transnational expansion, organised crime in Africa, now measured by experts and indexes, is increasingly framed as a major concern by national, regional and international actors and seen as ‘new’ and significant threats to human security and global stability. As a result, numerous transnational projects are developing programmes aimed at training actors in the criminal justice system or at strengthening legal frameworks on the continent. How these ‘new’ forms of crime are addressed and framed by African courts, however, has hardly been studied so far. This panel aims to fill such a gap and welcomes empirical contributions shedding light on questions such as:

- How are national criminal policies and practices being transformed by these ‘new crimes’? What are the political and cultural dynamics involved in the differential management of illegalisms?
- How do legal professionals deal with these new offenses? Which social, economical, cultural and political frames do they mobilise when handling cases?
- How do legal frameworks and standards circulate at regional and transnational levels?

Through the judicialization of ‘new threats’, this panel eventually aims to reflect on the way African judiciaries deal with new norms and tackle global stakes. It will also contribute to wider scholarship on the place of African courts in global politics.

### Masculinities and Politics: Afropean, Afropolitan, and African Perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Jennifer Lorin (Sweden) & Delphine Manetta (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the multiple intersections between masculinities and politics in African, Afropolitan, and Afropean contexts. It questions how masculinities shape and are shaped by global and regional struggles over power, mobility, and resources.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel examines the multiple intersections between masculinities and politics in African, Afropolitan, and Afropean contexts.

It aims at investigating how men in positions of authority—kings, leaders, elders, or other influential figures—shape their roles in relation to specific ideals of masculinity. Also, in light of the resurgence of identity politics, where African, Afropolitan, and Afropean forms of belonging have gained prominence, how men navigate and negotiate masculinity in contexts where socio-economic and cultural paradigms, often dictated by global North norms, continue to exert dominance?

This panel explores also how political changes, crises, and historical transformations have affected the construction of masculinities and gendered power relations across Africa and its diasporas. It seeks to understand how regional, national, and transnational dynamics influence the expressions of masculine identity, belonging, and exclusion in these spaces, in light of factors such as class, ethnicity, race and religion.

Furthermore, how men reinvent gender roles and relations when resources—such as economic power, political influence, or symbolic capital—become scarce or inaccessible? This includes analysing how masculinity is constructed and redefined in contexts shaped by capitalism, environmental crises, and shifting political economies, on the African continent and in the Afropolitan and Afropean spheres.

This panel will also delve into the hybridities and in-between spaces where masculinity is reimagined. By examining the intersections of masculine archetypes with shifting political, economic, and social landscapes, it contributes to broader discussions on African, Afropolitan, and Afropean belongings, as well as how these identities shape and are shaped by global and regional struggles over power, mobility, and resources.

## Masks, Masking and Tentacles

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Steven Van Wolputte (Belgium) & Jack Boulton (Belgium)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites papers which explore the potentiality of the mask- and masking-as-concept. We are particularly concerned with the relational and/or tentacular qualities of the verb ‘masking’: how does it enable us to explore and relate with others?

### ABSTRACT

The Latin word ‘persona’ referred to the masks actors wore, to allow the audience to understand the characters’ motives, intentions, and history. But what is a mask? Although masks and masquerades (or ‘masking’) have long been a subject of ethnographic enquiry, it is only recently that the study of masks has taken a more conceptual turn. Of course, masks came into the everyday vernacular during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the anthropological literature informs us that masks not only conceal the body: they also reveal (much like the masks from Antiquity). Masking harbours a creative and exploratory potential that also transforms us – allowing us to extend our identities into... Anything. In that sense, the mask also works as an exploratory tentacle – reaching out, trying new things, and connecting with others.

This panel invites papers which explore both the potential of the tentacle and of masking-as-concept. This might include (but is not limited to) masking in ritual and everyday life, the mask’s mimetic qualities, or ‘alternative’ or ‘non-normative’ understandings of what a mask can be. But we are particularly concerned with the relational and/or tentacular qualities of masking: the ways in which the mask and the act of masking help us to explore and relate with others – be those other people, objects, events, or moods and emotions. Throughout, we are questioning how people engage with and in masks and masking, prompting us to rethink fundamental processes of relatedness, intimacy, and selfhood.

## Mediatisation and Belonging: The Case of Sudan's current War

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Saskia Jaschek (Germany) & Andrea Behrends (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the reshaping of ethnic, social and political belonging in Sudan. It further questions the war's invisibility in global discourse, considering whether this reflects a form of global non-belonging that deprioritizes the crisis in public attention and intervention.

### ABSTRACT

In April 2023, war erupted in Sudan, killing hundreds of thousands of people and displacing millions. Although one of the world's major humanitarian crises, the media quickly presented this war as "the forgotten war." Despite this label, media coverage remains low, with global discourse presenting it as "another crisis currently occurring."

This panel has a twofold incentive to 'belonging': first, it seeks to explore the war's complex dynamics of ethnic, social, political, and economic belonging, noting how existing communal tensions have increased, leading to a reconfiguration of belonging and exclusion. We want to investigate how various actors have essentialized, mobilized, and instrumentalized identities to achieve political and military objectives. Further, we question the war's invisibility in public discourse, considering whether this reflects a form of global non-belonging that deprioritizes the crisis in public attention and intervention.

We invite papers to examine the following questions with a focus on one or both of the suggested connections to belonging: How are categories of belonging (Behrends 2024) re-constructed and re-deployed in the service of war? How do Sudanese people from various backgrounds navigate and negotiate their belongings in the context of conflict, hunger, and displacement? How can we explain the invisibility of this war, particularly in view of former mediatisation of Sudan's war (e.g. in 2003/4)? Is a global recognition of suffering needed to create a global form of belonging to fields of grievance and intervention and to counteract continuing discrepancies of belonging?

## Mobile Arts of Community Making and un-Making: Ethnographic Contributions from the Horn of Africa, its Diasporas and beyond

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Elia Vitturini (Italy) & Barbara Pinelli (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Mobile “arts” of community (un)making are intended as social actors’ repertoires of knowledge, know-hows, and the practices of their adaptation to mobility trajectories or diasporic contexts. The panel focuses on ethnographic (or historical) contributions about peoples from the Horn of Africa

### ABSTRACT

Making and un-making communities consist of repertoires of ideas and practices which, increasingly, peoples of the Horn of Africa deploy on the move. These arts travel with people, sometimes as a resource, sometimes as a burden; they may need to be adapted to conjunctures and contexts or actively discarded. Through them, the social and economic reproduction of social units at different levels (such as localities, nations, diasporas) and of social roles, the cultural re-imagination of categories of belonging (built around moral/cultural coordinates such as that of solidarity), the reformulation of political subjectivities and structures take place. Arts of community making are invoked in the many trajectories of crisis and change that have fragmented prior communities. They can be linked to economic inequalities, social fragmentation, moral/cultural dilemmas, political processes leading to conflicts.

Multi-sited villages and transnational territorialities as sites for producing social institutions have been theorised in other regions of Africa. In Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia or Sudan, several studies underlined the transformation of ethnic and genealogical groups into transnational social, economic and political networks. These studies enriched our knowledge of the lexicons and the practices of community making, but only updated context specific research can substantiate these lexicons through actors’ representations and practices. Considering also multiscale factors and processes, what do ethnographic and historical perspectives tell us about the conjunctural, current and travelling ideas of community and belonging? About laboratories of community making and un-making in specific contexts? How are they linked to or disconnected from claims and actual regimes of citizenship?

## Must We Remember?: Cultural memory, Identity formation and Nation building in Post-conflict Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Ngozika Obi-Ani (Nigeria) & Stanley Jachike Onyemechalu (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites scholars and practitioners from diverse backgrounds to challenge, discuss and re-imagine various forms of memory-making processes that might enrich our understanding of belonging, nation building and the (de)construction of identities in post-conflict African settings.

### ABSTRACT

Why do we remember painful pasts? How do painful and even traumatic memories of historical violence shape contemporary narratives of belonging and collective identity? What does "post-conflict" mean, and how can the memories of violent conflict be harnessed for reconciliation and nation building? The multidisciplinary approach to memory and conflict studies have gained increasing significance over the years. Scholars are engaging in the crucial task of confronting the often State-backed silencing of violent historical experiences and bringing attention to the traumas that have been left unspoken. This kind of work has potential to contribute to peace-building and conflict resolution mechanisms, especially with many societies in Africa still reeling from the legacies of past and current violent conflicts.

This panel, therefore, is interested in the various forms of memory-making processes in Africa or its diaspora that are used to counter hegemonic and exclusionary post-conflict narratives. Particularly, we are interested in how these memory-making processes – including indigenous, innovative or diaspora-led commemorative practices – shape or distort identity formation and nation building in post-conflict African contexts. Through this panel, we hope to gather specific insights into the various forms of memory-making processes that may not be currently visible in the Euro-American-dominated memory studies frameworks. We invite scholars and practitioners from diverse backgrounds to challenge, discuss and re-imagine various forms of memory-making processes that might enrich our understanding of belonging, nation building and the (de)construction of identities in post-conflict African settings.



## Narratives of Hybrid Belongings: Afropolitan and Afropean Identities in a Globalized World

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Adeyemi Johnson Ademowo (Nigeria) & Emmanuel Adeniyi (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to delve into the diverse and complex expressions of Afropolitan and Afropean identities in contemporary era. Drawing upon the works of scholars like Achille Mbembe, this panel aims to critically engage with the complexities of hybrid identities in Afropolitan and Afropean contexts.

### ABSTRACT

This panel aims to delve into the diverse and complex expressions of Afropolitan and Afropean identities in contemporary era. The concept of belonging has become increasingly multifaceted, shaped by various socio-economic, cultural and political factors. In today's interconnected world, these forms of identity are not static but are continually constructed, expressed, and performed across different regions and communities. Hence, we seek to explore how these identities are navigated in both physical and digital spaces, understanding the role of globalization, migration, and digital communication in shaping modern Afropolitan and Afropean identities.

The panel hopes to bring together scholars from diverse disciplines to discuss and challenge dominant knowledge paradigms, emphasizing the importance of personal backgrounds, identities, and positionalities in shaping the understanding of Afropolitan and Afropean realities. Some critical questions to be addressed include: How do historical, cultural, political, economic, and environmental factors influence the terms and expressions of identity and belonging? What are the implications of these expressions for different groups?

Drawing insights from works of Achille Mbembe, Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha, among others, we aim to critically engage the complexities of hybrid identities in Afropolitan and Afropean contexts. By presenting case studies from various localities alongside macro-regional and transnational analyses, we aim to highlight the diverse ways in which hybrid identities are formed and expressed. Methodologically innovative and critically reflective perspectives are encouraged to advance current thinking on Afropolitan and Afropean identities. Contributions that theorize from Africa and the global South are particularly welcome, fostering interdisciplinary and cross-continental collaborative scholarship.

## Navigating Between Ethical and Comfortable Living: Imagination and Belonging of African Youth in Flux

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Soichiro SHIRAIISHI (Japan) & Piotr Cichocki (Poland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We discuss the narratives and practices surrounding urban lives and its mobilities among African youth. Through ethnographic studies, we interpret how individuals navigate the tension between aspirations for social mobility and pursuing a normative life within neoliberal settings and stratification.

### ABSTRACT

In this panel, we will discuss the imagination and sense of belonging of urban dwellers in contemporary Africa, as shaped by consumerism and inequality.

Since the turn of the century, African cities have rapidly developed large-scale infrastructure and commercial facilities. These developments represent enormous wealth that remains inaccessible to the majority, thereby reinforcing stratification. This process has varied consequences on social life. Ethnographic studies on the transformation and rebirth of witchcraft illuminated people's occult interpretation of the capitalist world (Comaroffs, Geschiere, and others). Concurrently, urban residents cultivated an autochthonous sense of belonging to their origin partly in response to the xenophobia that arose as a consequence of mobility.

Building upon these prior studies, we aim to discuss ethnographic cases. For example, the widespread use of smartphones has amplified individuals' capacity to engage with urban environments through both textual and visual media, thereby expanding their possibilities and imaginative horizons. We observe a multitude of practices and narratives among young people who are exploring chances of potential upward social mobility. The narratives explore the uneven distribution of wealth and power that exist unevenly the (im)possibilities of engaging to global values, as well as desires for social mobility and belonging.

Ethnographies represent the social contexts in which these imaginaries of modernity are created and repeated. This panel considers a diverse range of cases related to this theme. By examining these cases, we aim to clarify how individuals conceptualize 'the ethical' or well-being while social mobility remains limited.

## No longer belonging: downward social mobility among the volatile middle classes

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Tessa Pijnaker (the Netherlands) & Lena Kroeker (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to increase our empirical and theoretical understanding of the African middle classes through a focus on downward social mobility. It explores how experiences of losing one's class position affect individuals, households and nations and relate to migration, age, gender and race.

### ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 2010s, global media outlets, financial institutions and consultancy firms marked the 'growing' African middle classes as drivers of development. Responding to these claims, in the past decade a rich scholarly debate emerged, which described the rise, aspirations and boundary making of the African middle classes. Studies from the field of poverty reduction show that people who enter the middle classes can have short-time experiences before falling again (Scott et al. 2018, Davis and Baulch 2011). Especially in times of crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, also the established African middle classes experience downward mobility. Yet, so far little attention has been paid to what happens when middle-class status is unmade (Coe and Pauli 2020, Kroeker 2018, Voigt 2021). Investigating this process of no longer belonging to the middle classes, is key to improve our empirical and theoretical understanding of what it means to be in the volatile middle in Africa. This panel welcomes contributions from anthropology, history, sociology and development studies that engage with the process of social descent from, within or into the middle classes. In particular, it looks for research that explores:

1. The effects of social descent on the individual, the household economy and/or the nation.
2. The emergence of downward social mobility in particular life phases (e.g. adolescence, retirement) and its effect on the body (e.g. illness, reproduction).
3. The connection between social decline and (transnational) migration f. ex. between urban and rural places of belonging.

## Nostalgia, Collective Memory, and the Social Lives of African Diasporas in Shifting European Landscapes

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Thabani Mutambasere (United Kingdom) & Lennon Mhishi (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

In response to Europe's socio-political shifts and rising hostility, African diasporas reconnect with homelands and each other, fostering hybrid identities and using nostalgia through cultural practices to cope. This panel explores these dynamics, inviting scholars and creatives to contribute.

### ABSTRACT

The recent socio-political developments across Europe, marked by a resurgence of right-wing politics, rising costs of living, and increasing hostility toward minorities, including those of African descent, have compelled and amplified how individuals seek solace and familiarity by reconnecting with their ancestral homelands. This phenomenon extends beyond a mere return to origins; it also encompasses a renewed engagement with fellow members of the diaspora, fostering hybrid identities and senses of multiple belonging. These interactions often involve the evocation of the homeland through various cultural practices, such as the use of objects, foods, music, and literature, which collectively evoke a sense of nostalgia. For example, cultural foods are known to enhance emotional well-being, while the communal experiences of cooking and dining together play a vital role in community building and the reinforcement of social ties. This observation is particularly relevant to African diasporic communities. This panel invites contributions from scholars, active researchers, and practitioners in the creative industries who are interested in exploring the social lives of African diasporas and examining how nostalgia and collective memory function as coping mechanisms within multiple diasporic settings.

We will prioritise submissions related to the following themes:

1. Identity and belonging, including cultural practices and preservation.
2. Community building and solidarity.
3. Sensory aspects of food among African diasporas.
4. Music and sound as memory and homing practices.
5. Circulation of materialities and construction of meaning.
6. Home as collective memory.
7. Significance of transnational cultural food chains.
8. Reconnections with ancestral homelands.
9. Nostalgia, memory, resilience and cohesion.

## Oversight Opportunities: Everyday Practices of Monitoring, Regulation, and Control in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Tessa Diphorn (the Netherlands) & Peter Albrecht (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel draws from interdisciplinary literatures on accountability and transparency to analyse formal and informal oversight institutions and practices in Africa. We especially seek to understand the subjectivities and power structures they have (re)produced.

### ABSTRACT

Notions of 'good governance,' transparency, and accountability have become central to discussions across various sectors on the African continent. These concepts have become integral to 1) criteria for defining practices of modernisation, 2) methods for assessing the effectiveness of states and their institutions, and 3) objectives of broader reform efforts. Over recent decades, diverse oversight bodies have been established to regulate transparency and accountability, such as review commissions for monitoring judicial processes, anti-corruption agencies targeting financial mismanagement, and regulatory bodies overseeing the operations of health services. In addition to these formal structures, grassroots initiatives have also emerged to exert control over (public) institutions. For instance, local watchdog groups monitor the distribution of public resources, while community leaders mediate between public utility providers and consumers to address issues such as water shortages. As such, private citizens and community leaders often play a crucial role in negotiating with and holding authorities accountable as intermediaries between authorities and local populations.

This panel welcomes papers that analyse how these—and other—forms of oversight operate across Africa, examining the subjectivities and power structures they have (re)produced. Drawing from interdisciplinary literatures on accountability and transparency, this panel positions oversight as a relational/negotiated practice manifesting in myriad ways. We aim to understand both formal and institutionalised forms of oversight, as well as the informal and unexpected ways in which individual citizens and community leaders regulate institutions. Additionally, we seek to explore how these practices reinforce or challenge power dynamics within various sectors and broader societal contexts.

### Pathways of Elderhood: African, Afropolitan, and Afropean Aging between Africa and Elsewhere

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Gloria Frisone (Italy) & Yassin Dia (Italy)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Based on historical and anthropological studies on demographic aging in Africa and the African diaspora, this panel aims to discuss aging as a de-(re)-territorialized, poly-localized, and transnational phenomenon that questions and reconfigures African, Afropolitan, and Afropean belongings.

#### ABSTRACT

Demographic aging is a global phenomenon that increasingly involves low-income countries. Nevertheless, the dominant global North paradigm still ignores the experiences of elders from Africa, both in their homelands and immigration countries.

In contrast, historical and anthropological studies have investigated the phenomenon of aging. Many scholars have extensively explored the life trajectories of elderly individuals on the African continent. Others have focused on the transnational experiences of elderly members of African diasporas in Europe and elderly migrants moving from Europe to Africa on behalf of the ancient “myth of return.” Similar studies have highlighted the complexities related to transnational experiences of aging, showing how they raise new challenges and question classical understandings of positionalities, identities, and forms of belonging.

Starting from these premises, the panel will gather contributions that focus on experiences of aging unfolding in hybrid and translational spaces that connect Europe and Africa. We will appreciate papers that unveil strategies for redefining subjectivities, horizons of belonging, and identity patterns from diverse social, symbolic, cultural, relational, political, institutional, health, and legal perspectives. We are particularly interested in contributions that explore, through an ethnographic perspective, the lived experiences of elders in different African contexts and diasporas. Moreover, we will seek a better understanding of how they exemplify complex and multifaceted identities and belongings to question binary categories such as African/non-African, European/non-European, and Global North/South. Finally, we call for papers that discuss aging as a de-(re)-territorialized, poly-localized, and transnational phenomenon, bringing to light hybrid reconfigurations of African, Afropolitan, and Afropean belongings.

## Pesticide politics in Africa: global circulation, production, research and regulation of agrochemicals

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Nathalie Jas (France) & Paul Wenzel Geissler (Norway)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Pesticides circulate globally, move between sites of production and use, connect laboratories, boardrooms and legislations, penetrate substrates, biota and ecologies, cut across scale from atmospheres to cells, and, persisting in bodies and environments, they mark temporalities and cut across times.

### ABSTRACT

Pesticides reached Africa through colonial experimentation with disease- and pest-control around WW2. With few exceptions, pesticides are synthesised elsewhere and imported to Africa, driven by corporate interest and by global initiatives like the 1970s Green Revolution, promoting state-supported economic growth, and the recent, more corporate-driven, New Green Revolution. In recent years, agrochemical imports have risen steeply across Africa, as have concerns with their harmful effects.

Most African nations have legislation to control and monitor the import and use of pesticides and have joined international agreements to limit their movements and harmful effects on humans and environment. Yet, the influence of African governments on global legislation remains limited compared to that of northern governments and multinational corporations, and national monitoring is hampered by lack of resources and political will.

Africa also contributes, since independence, to critical scientific research on health and environment, and participates in a global turn towards environmental awareness and health concerns. Faced with rising and uncontrolled pesticide use, growing rates of chronic illnesses, and incapacitated or obstructed scientific institutions, many African citizens, and scientists, participate in different forms of activism, independent evidence-collection and experimentation with agricultural alternatives.

This panel invites papers about the global production and circulation of pesticides and the actors, agencies, and political-economic processes behind it, about scientific research into the uses and the harmful legacies of pesticides, about attempts at global and national regulation and monitoring by state institutions, scientists and citizens, and about local and global activism in search of alternatives to agrochemical use.

## Post-Return Lives: African Experiences of Difficult Homecoming

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Alice Bellagamba (Italy) & Bruno Riccio (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

By looking at return as a key moment in the migratory experience, the related notion of "homecoming" will be assessed. The focus will be on the moral and social arguments on belonging, responsibility, mutuality and relatedness triggered by return migrations, especially under strain or coercion.

### ABSTRACT

Return is a crucial event in the migratory experience. It can be planned and organised, after a life spent living and working abroad. Or, it may happen suddenly in response to challenging circumstances that usher people's homecoming under various degrees of constraints. Often, it is a step towards further experiences of mobility. The multi-layered consequences of return migrations invest the existential path of individuals, as well as the trajectories of families, socioeconomic networks and communities both in Africa and the diaspora. Homecomings under strain (or coercion) challenge African life-trajectories and social, cultural and political environments, as much as they ignite moral and social arguments that question and reshape meanings of belonging, responsibility, mutuality and relatedness. The very notion of "homecoming" requires to be critically assessed along with ideas of "failure", frequently associated with that particular disadvantaged kind of mobility, which a Eurocentric point of view labels (and legally builds up) as "irregular" migration. The panel welcomes contributions that uncover the many ways through which homecoming drivers and experiences change over time through a bottom-up perspective that addresses the everyday life of return migrations. Case studies on post-return lives can be either contemporary or historical. A decolonial perspective that helps uncover the in-built assumptions of return migration studies is an urgent step towards an understanding of African histories of mobility and belonging from an Afro-centred perspective.



## Practices of social, cultural, and political representation in Northwest Africa, the Sahara and the Sahel

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Judit Tavakoli (Germany) & Bettina Gräf (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores how political identities and power relations are constructed and communicated in the broader regions of Northwest Africa.

### ABSTRACT

Practices of representation are inherently political, especially in conflict-ridden contexts. In Northwest Africa, the Sahara and Sahel ongoing low-intensity conflicts involve movements that seek to affirm social, ethnic, or national identities and regional autonomy. Key groups include the Amazigh in Morocco (Rif), Algeria (Kabyle), and Mali (Azawad), as well as the Hassaniyya-speaking Saharawi in Western Sahara. Marginalized social groups, such as the abolitionist movement in Mauritania and Soninke-speaking Mali, are also seeking representation. In addition, the integration of gender equality policies by governments adds another layer to these identity dynamics.

We invite papers that offer theoretical insights or empirical research on the representation of these movements, incorporating gender perspectives. Relevant areas include academic and political discourse, media representations, cultural expressions (such as literature, music, and visual arts), and historical narratives.

This call aims to explore how these groups and their conflicts are represented by both local and diasporic members, as well as the interrelationships between different representational practices and the power dynamics involved. We welcome papers that challenge established narratives and explore underrepresented aspects of conflict.

Topics of interest include:

1. Comparisons of regional and international representational practices
2. Linguistic hierarchies as key elements of representation
3. Emerging or contested representational practices and their legitimation
4. Negotiations between regional, national and trans-regional actors with different views
5. The intersection of gender, language, religion, and ethnicity in representation.

We welcome contributions that advance our understanding of how political identities and power relations are constructed and communicated in the broader regions of Northwest Africa.

## Race and development: African, Afropean and Africanist perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Anneke Newman (Belgium) & Emma Abotsi (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Drawing on African, Afropean and Africanist perspectives and experiences, this panel will critically explore how diverse ontologies of race are (re)produced, appropriated and/or resisted within spaces and practices associated with the international development industry.

### ABSTRACT

Literature unpacking the relationships between development and constructions of race emerged in the late 1990s/early 2000s but remained marginal until recent decolonial movements and protests around Black-LivesMatter. While increased interest in this issue is welcome, much of this scholarship uses theoretical frameworks based on experiences of communities of African descent in Europe and North America which may not always capture dynamics elsewhere, including Africa or the Caribbean. This panel will use spaces and practices associated with the development industry as sites to explore how ontologies of race travel and evolve between contexts – whether in development practice or academic scholarship.

Themes to address include the following. Much scholarship on race and development employs the framework of white saviourism. While this concept is useful, does the rise of BRICS and development driven by diaspora communities not introduce more complexity than this concept allows for? Calls for Pan-Africanism, Afrocentric development and reparative justice challenge models of development defined by global North perspectives. Yet, whose constructions of race or race-based solidarity dominate and what new hierarchies potentially emerge within these movements? What of non-Western ontologies of race and/or descent-based hierarchies in African contexts, such as those grounded in caste systems, or Islamic intellectual traditions and legacies of the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades? How do these ontologies intersect with Euro-North American racial classification schemes (themselves multiple) in contemporary contexts? Ultimately, how do we define race or racial justice, on the basis of which empirical contexts, whose perspectives, and with what theoretical implications?

## Reading beyond the lines: the transformative potential of creative methods

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Evelien Storme (Belgium) & Miriam Waltz (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Exploring the transformative potential of creative methods, this panel examines how visual storytelling, animation, games, and performative arts, among others, offer fresh perspectives on understanding and (re)imagining African identities in research, worldbuilding, and knowledge creation.

### ABSTRACT

Arts-based and creative methods have emerged as powerful tools for exploring alternative perspectives and fostering new ways of understanding and (re)imagining identities in research. They offer enhanced possibilities for bringing together diverse temporalities, scales, causalities and material realities that can be difficult to fit into a single frame. Moreover, they can offer novel possibilities as analytical tools, modes of collaboration and means of engaging non-academic audiences.

This panel focuses on the diverse motivations and impacts of using such multimodal methods within African contexts. These approaches encompass a wide range of practices, including visual storytelling, animation, game development, performative arts, and poetry, all of which engage in worldbuilding and pre-enact potential futures.

Our exploration centers on the creative processes that stimulate different ways of seeing, hearing, and sensing. These processes encourage expressive reflection and abstraction, allowing one to move within and beyond the concrete realities of their lifeworlds. Through this, they create "in-between spaces" where multiple perspectives and non-linear interpretations converge.

We are particularly interested in contributions that examine how these creative methods illuminate and interrogate identities, positionalities and (life) trajectories. How do collaborative creative methods shape the construction of knowledge that is both grounded in and reflective of African realities? What possibilities do they offer for unsettling authorship, transcending disciplinary boundaries and questioning biases maintaining current power relations? Via these questions, the panel aims to explore the transformative potential of creative methods in (re)imagining and expanding our understandings of African contexts.

### Revising the African City: Past, Present & Future Afropolitan Belongings

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Christian Vium (Denmark) & Filip De Boeck (Belgium)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores urbanization in Africa, focusing on youth in urban peripheries. It highlights peripheries as sites of potential, examining how youth navigate, envision, and articulate the city, calling for multimodal, collaborative approaches to reimagine and revision urban African histories.

#### ABSTRACT

Africa is the fastest urbanizing continent, and the majority urban population are youth inhabiting rapidly expanding urban peripheries (OECD 2020). Recent research highlights how youth on the urban periphery in Africa are largely excluded from articulating themselves in decision-making processes, experience prolonged periods of immobility and 'waithood', imagining a 'good life' in a globalized world (Honwana 2012; Pellow and Scheld 2023; Sommers 2010). Positing the urban periphery as a site of invention and potentiality, in which mobilities, imaginaries, and articulations constitute pivotal components, this panel invites for comparative analyses of how these converge in the everyday lives of youth, and asks:

*How do youth in urban peripheries in Africa move in, imagine, and articulate the city, and how may multimodal and collaborative approaches contribute to accountable 'Afropolitan' revisions of urban histories across the continent?*

We invite submissions from all African urban contexts, with a preference for projects that experiment with collaborative methodologies and multimodal research design integrating e.g. film, photography, sound, art, and archives. Emphasis will be placed on collaborative methods such as workshops, local exhibition-making, online dissemination, and 'citizen-science' protocols, that engage communities, research participants, and partners in accountable knowledge production.

With this panel, we invite for an Afropolitan (Mbembe 2007) reimagining of urban Africa with a point of departure in explorations of in-between spaces, hybridities, becomings, and belongings as manifest in the articulations, mobilities, and imaginaries of African youth.

## Revisiting the political demography of Africa: population-environment-culture-policy interactions

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Jon Abbink (the Netherlands) & Pending Forthcoming (Ethiopia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will host papers addressing demographic phenomena in Africa, in the broad sense: the relationships between (perceptions of) population growth & dynamics with environment, state policies, conflict and related issues of communal and cultural identity.

### ABSTRACT

This panel will host papers addressing demographic phenomena in Africa, in the broad sense: the relationships between (perceptions of) population growth & dynamics with environment, state policies, conflict and related issues of communal and cultural identity. These factors are intertwined in producing specific patterns of political demography, an approach which has studied correlations and possible causal lines between them. Current understandings of this dynamics have insufficiently discussed Africa-based interpretations vs. others, and need re-examination in a global-comparative context. Also, dominant theorizations of conflict and demographic change that often saw demography as relatively autonomous (“Demography rules”) need reassessment and contextualisation, notably regarding cultural and identity-political elements, e.g., regarding perceptions of fertility and population policy. We invite country-based case studies as well as comparative-theoretical papers on the subject, which due to its perceived conflict-related aspects is gaining in relevance and in heightened policy attention.

## Social media and the transformation of networks of belonging in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Mirjam de Bruijn (the Netherlands) & Sylvie Ayimpam (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks to explore how digital social media redefine groups and networks of belonging, in contexts of insecurity, where unequal access to resources and hierarchical structures shape social and political belonging.

### ABSTRACT

Digital social media such as TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook and X are profoundly transforming the dynamics of groups and networks of belonging in Africa. This transformation is particularly marked in contexts of insecurity, whether linked to armed conflict, political violence or socio-economic insecurity.

Insecurity in Africa takes many forms: armed conflict displaces populations and fragments societies, while economic insecurity marginalizes entire communities, generating insecurity and inequality. In addition, social marginalization and discrimination (linked to gender, ethnicity or religion) reinforce divisions that are echoed online. In this context, social media are not limited to spaces for radicalization or violent mobilization, as some researchers postulate, but also become places for reinventing solidarity and reconfiguring affiliations, which are often transnational and fluid.

This panel invites case studies that critically examine how groups and networks of belonging are recomposed via social media in these diverse contexts of insecurity. Drawing on the ‘politics of belonging’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and ‘correspondences’ (Ingold, 2016), we propose to explore how social identities are recreated in digital spaces, in complex dialogue with historical (colonialism, marginalization) and technological realities. Digital groups of belonging are often ‘messy’, multiple and hybrid, and their study requires an innovative methodological approach.

We are placing particular emphasis on methodologies that combine classical ethnography with online social network analysis (netnography) and/or computational methods. This panel aims to enrich discussions on the opportunities and risks of social networks in contexts of insecurity.

## Somali Cosmopolitanism: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Yusra Abdullahi (the Netherlands) & Nereida Ripero-Muñiz (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will examine how Somaliness is negotiated in transnational contexts, with an emphasis on how identity and a sense of belonging are shaped within the Somali diaspora in Africa, Europe, and beyond.

### ABSTRACT

This panel will examine how Soomaaliniimo (Somaliness) is negotiated in transnational contexts, with an emphasis on how identity and a sense of belonging are shaped within the Somali diaspora in Africa, Europe, and beyond. Migratory routes and cultural dynamics provide a lens through which to analyse identity construction and understand the cosmopolitan nature of the Somali experience. It will look at how social categories—such as gender and ethnicity—impact Somali identities as well as how wider sociopolitical and historical factors shape these identities.

By considering the hybridity and fluidity of Somali identities, the panel welcomes contributions that explore how Somalis interact with wider African, Afropolitan, and Afropean forms of being. The global interconnectedness of Somalis challenges conventional notions of static identities and instead foregrounds the fluidity of belonging that is formed by the interplay of digital and physical influences.

Identity construction and belonging constitute a circular process for Somalis living outside of Somali territories, and the sense of self of diasporic Somalis is continuously transformed through engagement with their Somali heritage in conjunction with their lived experiences in a global context, in the process blurring the Global North/South paradigm.

Scholars across all disciplines are invited to participate in this panel discussion to advance our knowledge of Soomaaliniimo on a multiscalar level. We invite presentations that draw from multidisciplinary methodologies and approaches. Reflections that offer refreshing perspectives are also encouraged to push the boundaries of how we conceptualise Somaliness in an increasingly globalised context.

## Sudanese displacement: capital, identity and agency

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Munzoul Assal (Sudan) & Mari Norbakk (Norway)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

In the current global climate, capital travels more easily than humans, and in this panel we wish to examine the intersections of capital, borders, politics and identities through an engagement with Sudanese displaced by war.

### ABSTRACT

The outbreak of war in Sudan which saw heavy fighting in Khartoum in April 2023 took Sudanese and the international community by surprise. The immediate exodus of Sudanese from the capital was characterized by urgent needs, and the assumptions by many that fighting would be over shortly. Many packed light, thinking they would soon return. Now, in the fall of 2024 most Sudanese have revised their timelines, and find themselves in prolonged displacement. These temporal considerations are impacted by issues related to capital. For many families their entire capital holdings were reduced to whatever hard currency and other valuables they had carried with them in the frantic scramble to escape the war. What does it mean for millions to be out of a job so suddenly and for this long? What does the value of earned money come to mean under these conditions? And how do these new economic considerations contribute to the reconstitution of identities in displacement?

In the current global climate, capital travels more easily than humans, and in this panel we wish to examine the intersections of capital, borders, politics and identities through an engagement with Sudanese displaced communities. The Sudanese engagement with host communities has so far been strongly defined by the efforts of the displaced populations themselves. We therefore seek to reposition the discussion of identity and belonging in displacement away from state-centric debates to focus on the agentive force within the Sudanese community and their new neighbors.



## The difficulties of compulsory education in African countries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Maria Antonia Barreto (Portugal) & Clara Carvalho (Portugal)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to critically reflect on African education systems within the scope of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through case studies, exploratory studies, and theoretical reflections, we strive to discuss the challenges and potential solutions in African education.

### ABSTRACT

Educational legislation in African countries universally upholds the principles of free and compulsory education for children across different age groups. However, despite these commitments, significant challenges persist. While enrollment rates have risen in the 21st century compared to the 20th century, many children remain out of school, and issues such as high dropout and repetition rates are prevalent in certain areas.

Beyond these concerns, more profound structural challenges demand attention—ranging from the accessibility and affordability of education to shortages in physical and human resources, gender disparities, cultural barriers, and, most critically, the overall quality of education. These issues call for a comprehensive reflection on the efficacy and equity of African education systems.

In addressing these challenges, it is crucial to recognize the diverse contexts within which African education systems operate. Economic disparities, demographic pressure, regional conflicts, and rapid urbanization further complicate efforts to ensure equitable access to quality education. This panel will explore how education policies can align with local realities. We will consider how innovative approaches, community involvement, and international cooperation can play a pivotal role in shaping more resilient and inclusive education systems.

This panel seeks to critically examine the state of African education systems within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. Through case studies, exploratory research, and theoretical analysis, we aim to explore the key challenges facing education in African countries and examine practical, innovative solutions to improve outcomes that have been tested.

### The micropolitics of development: emerging actors, networks and identity politics

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Marie Deridder (Belgium) & Benjamin Rubbers (Belgium)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines ethnographically the political dynamics surrounding development projects carried out by emerging actors in the development sector, with a focus on repertoires of political action, transcalar network dynamics, and identity politics.

#### ABSTRACT

Development projects are increasingly funded by, or carried out in partnership with organisations including, among others, churches, private funds, mining corporations, conservation NGOs, or international institutions working in the field of peace building or migration. The ways in which the development projects carried out by such organisations are designed, implemented, and negotiated locally show specific features that deserve to be explored in more details.

This panel aims at examining ethnographically the micropolitics around this type of project, with a focus on repertoires of political action, transcalar network dynamics, and identity politics. Who are the actors involved, and what forms of knowledge do they produce on or about Africa? To what extent these development projects give rise to new forms of political action, performances, and discourses, whether it is for or against their implementation? How coalitions are built over time and across scales, from the local to the global through the regional and the national? How far these networks challenge fragmentation and the structural division between the Global North and South? What claims are made to these projects' promoters, and what languages of belonging and exclusion are mobilised in the process?

This list of questions is not exhaustive. Generally speaking, we invite contributions that provide fresh empirical insights on the political dynamics surrounding development projects carried out by non-traditional organisations and propose on this basis a broader reflection on the conference theme.

### The new African studies? Open access mega journals, academic publishing practices, and the data economy

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** **Stephanie Kitchen** (United Kingdom) & **David Mills** (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We invite submissions that explore the impact of citation metrics, institutional research cultures, and the Open Access data economy on African academic publishing practices, journal identities and scholarly belonging.

#### ABSTRACT

The volume of papers by Africa-affiliated authors being published by new and proliferating Open Access mega-journals, published and controlled from the Global North, opens up important questions about academic belonging, the data economy, and the future of African Studies. Will these very large, relatively inclusive, interdisciplinary and rapid publication APC-funded journals reshape existing cultures of social science publishing? Is this development creating a shadow field haunted by concerns over authority, quality, peer review and relevance? Might these journals eventually displace existing disciplinary ‘credibility economies’ and dominant knowledge orthodoxies? In an academic landscape riven by metricisation and bibliometric coloniality, what impact are these journals having on both established African Studies journals and more specialist titles? How are established journals responding to the market pressure to publish more?

In this hybrid panel we invite researchers, journal editors, publishers and librarians to reflect on the identities and communities created around journals, in African Studies and beyond. We are particularly interested in understanding the impact of publishing incentives and research ‘productivism’ on academic culture, hierarchies associated with different types of scholarly ‘outputs’, and the importance of place-based knowledge dissemination and publishing. Presenters may also want to analyse the time and resource economies of editing and peer review, as well as the financial precarity of many ‘diamond’ Open Access university and institutional journals. Papers can range from conceptual critiques to detailed empirical case studies, from investigations of journal and publishing finances to scientometric analyses.

## The Polemics of Religion and Sexuality: Media, Urbanity and Contested Normativities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Marian Burchardt (Germany) & Rijk van Dijk (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Controversies over religion and sexuality have taken center-stage in African public spheres, caused by the proliferation of new gender performances and sexual lifestyles as well as radical transformations of marriage and intimacy. The panel explores these polemics from ethnographic perspectives.

### ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, controversies over religion and sexuality have taken center-stage in the public spheres of many African societies. Much of this has to do with the increasing proliferation of new forms of gender performances and sexual lifestyles as well as radical transformations in the realms of marriage and intimacy. In the metropolitan centers, new sexualities often pivot on stylized notions of urbanity and sophistication, on the need to style oneself according to divergent normativities. The increasing use and availability of new media but also of communication platforms and dating apps play into and wildly exacerbate these dynamics. Such transformations of sexuality occur under gaze of multiple religious actors who evaluate, and often criticize, them and are highly influential in fashioning sexual ethics. Religious arenas have turned into sites where the place of sexuality in personal life is dramatized. These processes feed into emotionally charged polemics that espouse rather context-specific dynamics, often determined by specific (religious and other) actors that voice their moral claims in public domains in particular ways. In this panel, we explore these processes from anthropological and sociological perspectives. We invite papers that explore these polemics of religion and sexuality from an empirical perspective. Themes include (but are not limited to):

- Dating practices and interreligious (e.g. Christian-Muslim) intimacies
- Religion, pornography and sex scandals
- Religion, health and HIV/AIDS
- Ethnographies of intimacies in religious settings
- Controversies over queer subjectivities, homosexuality, and gender fluidity
- Religious identities and sex-education

## The Sociotechnical Lives of Digital Identification: Intermediaries, Citizenship, and Belonging [CRG Digital Africa]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Georges Macaire Eyenga (South Africa) & Laura Lambert (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites a discussion on research examining the role of intermediaries (NGOs, registration agents, technological infrastructures) in civil identification and registration, and their contribution to the reconfiguration of citizenship and the sense of belonging.

### ABSTRACT

In recent years, an international network, including the UN, World Bank, NGOs, and multinational corporations (and many respectable researchers!), has actively pursued the "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) principle, which emphasizes that no individual or group should be excluded from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among these goals is SDG 16.9 "right to legal identity", which is seen as central for accessing essential services like education, healthcare, justice, and financial services. This framing has allowed a shifting coalition of private and public actors to push for digital identification programs in Africa where over 500 million people are considered to lack such identity. A key feature of these programs is the reliance on digital technologies that render individual subjects identifiable by linking a person's biographical information to their biometric data and a unique identification number. The deployment of these technologies affects how the state views its citizens and how citizens perceive their relationship with the state. Technicization is seen as a means to instill trust in the identities produced, with biometrics serving as the foundation of what firms and governments call trust infrastructure. However, the political economy of identification programs reveals the emergence of a lucrative, competitive market involving donors, tech companies, and local intermediaries (e.g. NGOs, enrolment agents, introducers), which risks to reproduce the clientelism, fraud, and mechanisms of exclusion these technologies were meant to eliminate. This panel invites empirical research that examines the role of human and non-human intermediaries in re-shaping citizenship and belonging through these identification practices.

### Toxic accumulations: exposure, growth and environment in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Ruth Jane Prince (Norway) & Noemi Tousignant (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines circulations, absorptions and accumulations of toxic substances at different scales, through and into bodies, organisms and materials, ecologies and landscapes, following entanglements with extraction, growth and development, and how forms of toxicity are noticed and acted upon.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel attends to the circulations, absorptions, and accumulations of toxic substances (e.g. agrochemicals, industrial and mining extractions, waste, toxic dust, and air pollution) at different scales, through and into bodies and organisms, elements and materials.

It has two aims. First, to explore the ambivalent entanglements of toxic substances with economies premised on growing social injustices, and focused on extraction, optimization and profit; but also with aspirations and promises of development and growth; and, ultimately, with the depletion of land, labour, livelihoods and natural resources.

Second, to explore the 'downstream' effects of toxic circulations, absorptions and accumulations, attending to how these manifest and are experienced in diverse forms of human and non-human life and its material conditions; and how such locations and circulations of toxicity become visible and may be noticed and acted upon.

We are interested in toxic absorptions into and circulations among diverse forms of life (e.g. plants, soil, animals, humans), materials (e.g. food and housing), and elements (e.g. air, water, earth), ecologies and landscapes; how they are entangled in particular political economies; and/or how they become subject to or are excluded from diverse forms of evidence-making, governance and regulation.

Paying attention to circulations, absorptions and accumulations leads to questions of how these are experienced, made visible or recognized. Through which registers (e.g. affective, somatic, numerical, experimental) and on which scales (e.g. bodily, household, neighborhood, scientific, governmental) are they noticed or monitored and normalised or contested? And how do they enter public debate, citizen science or civic activism?

### Tracing Afropolitanism in West Africa: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to Current Debates

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Rosa De Jorio (United States) & Sten Hagberg (Sweden)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Building on historical and anthropological perspectives, the panel explores how social movements, such as political parties, religious groups, human rights organizations, and women’s associations, have appropriated, adapted, or redefined global cultural flows in specific West African contexts.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel delves into the dynamic landscape of social movements in present-day West Africa, focusing on political parties, religious groups, human rights organizations, and women’s associations. Building on historical and anthropological perspectives, it aims to explore how movements and groups have appropriated, adapted, or redefined global cultural flows within specific West African contexts. This panel further examines how such movements have spurred the formation of new forms of belonging, generating wider social and political transformations, including the political discourses on decolonization and decoloniality.

Panelists are invited to critically engage with the concept of Afropolitanism, defined as “cosmopolitanism with African roots” (Gehrmann 2016, 61) and as reflecting individual searches for de-essentialized identities. Afropolitanism offers a framework for understanding African creativity, global participation, and diverse senses of belonging. By examining specific social movements, the panel aims to contribute to debates on the strengths and limitations of Afropolitanism. Hence, while the concept of Afropolitanism might bring important correctives to present-day narratives of African societies and politics, such as restoring human agency against narratives that foreground violence, corruption, and autocracy, it must be approached with a critical lens to avoid oversimplifying or romanticizing complex realities, as well as to assess its contributions to discourses on decolonization and decoloniality.

Panelists are especially encouraged to explore the possibilities and limitations of Afropolitan perspectives in understanding cultural and political shifts in West Africa and beyond, and to consider its potential in decolonizing knowledge and countering Afro-pessimism.

### Transformative Research Collaborations, Pan-African Thoughts and Global Knowledge Flows

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** **Isabella Aboderin** (United Kingdom) & **Puleng Segalo** (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Inspired by the Africa Charter for Transformative Research Collaboration, the panel will explore how to imagine collaborations in a cosmopolitan world underpinned by inequalities of mobility and imbalances in flows and exchanges. It will also explore the role of Pan-African intellectual orientations.

#### ABSTRACT

The Africa Charter is informed by the long history of Pan-African intellectual thought and engagement and is concerned with upholding and advancing Africa's contribution to the generation of scientific knowledge. The Africa Charter understands that international collaborations—because they dominate Africa's research efforts—are a critically important entry point for rebalancing the global scientific effort as a whole, ensuring that scholars, institutions, and knowledge produced from the continent take their rightful place. To do so, such collaborations must embrace a transformative mode of partnership working. A mode that pursues greater fairness in concrete partnership arrangements and actively redresses each of the multiple fundamental layers of power imbalance in the production of scientific knowledge.

In advancing these transformative objectives, we want to explore the extent to which the various trends and intellectual traditions of Pan-African thought contribute to correcting Africa's marginal role in the scientific knowledge production ecosystem. What kinds of perspectives can we draw from Pan-Africanism to further deepen the intellectual underpinnings of the Africa Charter, the articulation of the multiple layers of power imbalances and their intertwined relations, the identification of actors and processes of change and the potential domains of change at the levels of consciousness, norms and values, access and allocation of resources, and policy and legal frameworks. We aim to initiate critical debate and dialogue on the above issues whilst reflecting on the broader themes of "African, Afropean and Afropolitan".



### Transnational Afrofeminist Movement-Building Across the Diaspora

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** **Serena Dankwa** (Switzerland) & **Aminata Cécile Mbaye** (the Netherlands)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites papers from across disciplines that engage with the dynamic struggles of Black women's and Afrofeminist initiatives in Europe and the African diaspora, including the continent itself.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel invites papers that engage with the dynamic struggles of afrofeminist and Black feminist initiatives in Europe, Africa and its diasporas. Despite Black women's crucial role in liberation struggles across Africa and its diaspora, and the global nature of afrofeminism, Black feminism is mainly associated with African American feminist thought. On the one hand, this panel considers how Black feminist initiatives are (re)claiming and generating specifically afropean traditions, while also repositioning themselves with regard to the anti-racist legacies of the Civil Rights Movement and instead grounding analysis and action in the particular histories of racial capitalism of (post)colonial European nation-states. On the other hand, it focuses on how afrofeminists in Africa and its diaspora envision alternative and transformative imaginaries by drawing on decolonial and non-binary perspectives as well as radical political practices that rethink the distribution and dissemination of knowledge. The (re)emergence and contested visibility of afrofeminist movements in Europe, Africa and its diaspora calls for assessing various transnational and local feminist dynamics: What are the historical and current relations between Black feminist theories and activist movements in different parts of the world? How do the actions of women's and queer-feminist groups and networks relate to other forms of anti-colonialist, anti-imperial and anti-capitalist movements on the African continent and in Europe? How do such collectivities and mobilizations straddle generational and geopolitical differences along the lines of age, class, ability, gender and sexuality? How do afrofeminist collectives use communication technologies to create (trans)national networks of belonging and propose alternative political imaginaries?

## Vital Ecologies of Care and Repair: Human and Nonhuman Worldmaking in Uncertain Times

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Adeline Masquelier (United States) & Nathalie Arnold Koenings (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel thinks relationally about damaged African bodies and landscapes by tracing collaborative forms of remembering, healing, and survival in the pluriverse. Can acknowledging the presence of others in contexts of injury, care, and repair help us better grasp the texture of African lifeworlds?

### ABSTRACT

Posthumanism has taught scholars to take seriously narratives that let the past bleed into the present, push against spirit/matter divides, and suture the animate to the inanimate, thereby complicating official histories and ecologies in the process. Drawing on these lessons, this panel considers African modes of living with, knowing, and caring that are often left out of the categories that are “good to think with.” The notion of “vital ecologies of care and repair” is a heuristic device—a means of foregrounding the diverse forms of sociality and intimacy that are the stuff of collaborative remembering, healing, and survival in the pluriverse. Contributors to the panel are invited to think relationally about damaged bodies and landscapes by tracing the webs of connectivity enmeshing entities of all kinds and attending to the forms that injury, care, and repair take on the edge of exclusion. Can grappling with the unseen and the unsaid and tuning in to the truth of “the possible,” rather than “the actual,” offer a method for capturing the vital interdependence of humans and nonhumans, spirit and matter, places and political forces? How do we write about modes of healing, stewardship, and repair that unsettle sedimented temporalities, push against the limits of human perception, and disrupt human-centric notions of mastery? Can acknowledging the presence of others (be they birds, spirits, stones, etc.) through their effects help us grasp the texture of African experience in uncertain times? We solicit papers that engage with these questions conceptually and empirically.

### Ways of belonging through learning and work: vocational training and informal learning in West Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Erdmute Alber (Germany) & Cati Coe (Canada)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel focuses on how education in technical skills contributes to the belonging of young people working and learning in such programmes. We welcome papers looking at technical schools, the values ascribed to apprenticeships, or young people's navigations of different forms of informal training.

#### ABSTRACT

Education in vocational and technical skills has long been important in West Africa, across colonial and post-colonial eras, and it is considered a pillar in the development of the nation. Since the 1990s, reforms have attempted to channel technical and vocational education and training (TVET) through the formal school system, or at the very least, standardise and incorporate some schooling in the training provided by master craftspeople in the informal sector. Despite the reforms, traditional forms of apprenticeships under master craftspeople continue to dominate technical training in West Africa, especially among those from families of modest means and those living outside urban conglomerates. Our assumption is that this is partly due to ways of belonging which are created through learning specific skills and also shape decisions of what to learn. Blacksmithing and *jali*, in which a profession is linked to specific families, are some examples for the entanglements of familial belonging and the making of belonging through professional choices that provide a template for contemporary technical training in other fields.

Young people's perspectives are mostly ignored in these processes. The panel seeks to focus on young people and their voices, without losing sight of the importance of the social fabric of their societies. We welcome papers that look at ways of belonging in technical schools, examine the value ascribed to apprenticeships under master craftspeople, or focus on the question of how different forms of informal learning are part of a complex, multifaceted landscape which young women and men navigate.

What is 'good scholarship' on traditions and practices of philosophical thinking, intellectual engagement, and social critique in Africa? An interdisciplinary panel discussing cases and criteria

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Kai Kresse (Germany) & Oriare Nyarwath (Kenya)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary panel discusses criteria for 'good research' on philosophical thinking, intellectual engagement, and social critique, in view also of decolonial demands. Scholars in/of anthropology, philosophy, literature, history, and religious studies discuss case studies and approaches.

### ABSTRACT

In the light of recent demands for the 'decolonization' of knowledge, and with a view to a critical re-assessment of the criteria of/for good scholarship, this interdisciplinary panel invites scholars from everywhere, working in/with philosophy, anthropology, literature, history, and religious studies, to discuss, by means of specific case studies, ways and approaches of adequate and sensitive research on traditions and practices of philosophical thinking, intellectual engagement, and social critique in Africa. Hereby, we are interested in relevant continuities of good and critical scholarship as much as in innovative approaches and/or critical (re)readings of colonial, pre-colonial and post-colonial archives and experiences.

In the understanding that there are multiple ways of pursuing 'good scholarship', we seek fruitful exchange and constructive discussions toward the formulation of adequate principles and criteria that are acceptable across disciplines. Taking earlier debates and research along these lines into consideration (e.g. Masolo and Karp 2000; Oruka and Masolo 1983), and understanding 'traditions' as living (and changing) processes of mediating and performing meaning, we seek to highlight especially the relevance of working closely and deeply with African languages and their ways of being used, in terms of concepts and conceptualizations – in/for lived realities by local thinkers as well as by academics in their fields – as well as the relevance of translation, both between African languages and from African languages to Europhone ones.

## What's God got to do with it? The (un)making of sex, marriage, and family in East Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Norah Kiereri (Switzerland) & Henri Medard (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel considers the tensions between religious discourses and everyday practices of sex, marriage, and family in East Africa. Situating institutions, communities, and individuals in East Africa in their historical and current glocal realities, we show how they negotiate moral ways of being.

### ABSTRACT

Contentions about sex and marriage have been prevalent across East Africa since the massive conversions to Christianity (and to a lesser extent to Islam) during the 19th and 20th century. Love, sex, marriage and other forms of partnerships were radically transformed as missionaries and later national churches pushed for the creation of Christian families. As a result, conflicts emerged about what constitutes respectable or morally acceptable sex, marriage, and families as individuals and communities confronted and were confronted by the tensions presented by their lived realities vis a vis the prevailing norms. These conflicts have endured to date in various forms involving old and new competing moralities derived from the religious, customary, secular, and now more than ever before, the global. The actors and sites of tensions have been shaped by rapidly changing socio-economic, political, and religious landscapes. As family codes are being debated and rewritten across the continent, this panel considers contemporary and historical cases that illustrate the different ways that the discourses and practices of marriage, sex, and family have and continue to intersect with religion in East Africa. Drawing from archival and ethnographic data, the panel will discuss some of the the nuanced, fuzzy adaptations, inventions, tensions, and transgressions in which individuals, institutions, and communities are entangled.

### Youth Mobilities, Digital Technologies, and Transnational Connections in Africa and the Diaspora

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Anthropology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Sarah Anschütz (the Netherlands) & Ruth Cheung Judge (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the ways in which digital technologies and media transform 'non-crisis' migrations and mobilities of African diaspora and African youth. Focusing on how the digital and embodied intersect, we invite papers on new digitally-mediated youth mobilities, networks, and positionings.

#### ABSTRACT

In transnational migration studies, digital technologies have primarily been understood as a way to connect those who leave and those who stay behind, and, more recently, as a key infrastructure of forced migration journeys. Yet recent technological developments in Europe and Africa mean that 'the digital' today has far greater repercussions for African, Afropolitan and Afropean life-worlds 'on the move'. This is particularly the case for young people.

Bringing together research on youth in Africa and in the diaspora, this panel seeks to explore the intersections of 'non-crisis' youth mobilities and digital media to offer new insights into how the digital is not just a conduit for transnational connectivity, but a fundamental factor shaping the changing character of young people's everyday lives and geographies: it shapes mobility practices and imaginaries, transnational engagements, and articulations of belonging. We are particularly interested in the ways that the digital is entangled with embodied practices and affective experiences, and the formation of new African/Afropolitan/Afropean networks through the digital. We invite papers that consider how technology usage is situated in specific contexts, and how global inequalities, class, gender, and other categories affect (im)mobility experiences. Potential topics include, but are not limited to: the ways digital mediation is reshaping youthful diaspora-'homeland' engagements; the role of smartphones during 'non-crisis' youth mobilities driven by leisure, 'roots', or economic endeavours; the interplay between hyper-connectivity, capitalism, and the character of youthful Afropolitanisms; the impact of everyday digital infrastructures and online communities in mobilising (imaginaries of) movement between Africa and Europe.

## Arts and Culture

### African Female identities and Afropolitanism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Peter Oni (Nigeria) & Jacinta Mwendu Maweu (Kenya)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The dynamics of belonging and un-belonging, homing and un-homing that shape the many identities of African Diasporic women necessitate an interrogation from various fields of studies, thoughts and encounters that repositions the contours of African Diasporic women's identities.

#### ABSTRACT

In an age of increasing glocalisation and intersectionality, the identity crises among Africans in the Diaspora typify daily existential situations. For Diasporic born generations of women with African ancestry, life presents unique experiences of intersectionality and interrelatedness that sometimes conflict with traditional African gender norms owing to undue influences of the global, American, Asian or European cultural and value confluence. Negotiating such tensions between binary images and stereotypes of male-female Afropolitan personalities, pessimistic-optimistic Afropolitans with gender or gender-neutral roles compound the emerging narratives on the phenomenology of Africanness amongst Africa diasporic women self/non-self-identified as Afropolitans. This social status calls for an examination of the place and space, time and boundaries of African women in the complex world of intersecting identities grappling with experiences of multiple senses of belonging and homing. It also calls for a reassessment of their agency, a rewriting of the narratives on African diasporic women and an interrogation of the binary stereotypes of gender, femineity, and sexuality that are critical impediments in the process of navigating freely through multiple heritage and identities. In this regard, the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and un-belonging, homing and un-homing that shape the many identities of African Diasporic women necessitate an interrogation from various fields of studies, thoughts and encounters that repositions the contours of African Diasporic women's identities. Against this background, this panel seeks perspectives from different disciplines on the agenda of repositioning African Diasporic female identities in their complex and dynamic Afropolitan spaces.

## African Popular Culture, Transnationality, and the Digital Space

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Paul Onanuga (Nigeria) & Mary Okadigwe (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the dispersal of African Popular Culture through the appropriation of the digital space. It problematises this dispersal through the lens of transnationality and the politics of identity and representation.

### ABSTRACT

While popular culture practices resonate with the mass population and speak to the immediate realities and experiences of the larger population, such productions have very short shelf-life since they are dominant for only a brief period of time. However, through globalisation facilitated by the Internet and the digital media space, popular culture from different parts of the world are diffused faster by seemingly omnipresent media (Dodds & Funnell, 2020). On this panel, the digital space is conceptualised as an archive through which one can curate African popular culture – music, video skits, memes, advertisement, TV series, etc. We are interested in the creative counter-flows and cross-cultural influences especially between Africa and Europe which emanate from the resultant interactions, foregrounding the African space, the African diaspora, and non-African spaces.

The panel invites papers discussing:

- the connections between African popular culture productions, the African diaspora and non-African cultures
- individual authenticity, the allure of capitalism and global mass consumption
- cultural appropriation and hybrid identities
- cultural representations of Africa and the African in transnational productions and the influences on historical memory
- cultural representation, myths and traditional tropes in modern transnational creative productions
- pop cultural expressions and gender/sexuality issues
- pop cultural expressions of national identities and migration movements
- pop cultural expressions and climate/ecocritical issues
- fandom practices and participatory culture

The panel intends to create knowledge and raise awareness on the diversity of African popular culture, the mediating roles of the digital space and the reflections of transculturality and transnationality in these cultural productions.



## African Storytelling: Documenting Narratives of Cultural Identity & Belonging

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Ezinne Ezepue (Nigeria) & Megan Jones (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

African Storytelling is evolving, manifesting in multiple forms, from folklore to music, film, and more. This panel will document multiple avenues of storytelling in Africa, and its diaspora. It is interested in understanding what stories hold about histories, identities, belongings, positionings

### ABSTRACT

During ECAS 2023, we called for a panel on African Storytelling where we queried the past, present and future of African narratives. That panel sparked interesting conversations on storytelling, raising questions about the nature of African storytelling, specifically: Is African storytelling universal or culturally specific? In what unique ways are African stories told? Building on these, this panel will ask how stories and storytelling inform and/or promote cultural/national/regional backgrounds, privileges, identities, positioning and belongings. How do stories indicate multifaceted subjectivities that transcend tribal, gender, social or religious divides to include racial categories like African, Afro-Brazilian, Afropean, etc.? This panel calls for contributions on African storytelling, especially how stories told through different art forms inform historical, cultural, political, economic, religious and social formations. The panel is interested in understanding how African storytelling differs from or coincides with storytelling from other worlds. How are stories and storytelling expressions of cultural identities, belongings or exclusions? How did story(telling) shape past realities and how does it impact the present and inform the future? What, for example, might be the impact of A.I. on the future of African storytelling? As contributions will be considered for inclusion in a proposed Routledge Handbook of African Storytelling, this panel encourages contributions from various regions/countries of the continent. It calls for papers that transcend disciplinary, cultural, regional, national, continental boundaries and will serve as a guide to emerging practitioners and researchers.

### Africanizing European Spaces: African diasporic life-worlds

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Eric Anchimbe (Germany) & Feyi Ademola-Adeoye (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks critical and reflective contributions that explore how Africans living in Europe maintain their connection with their original sociocultural roots while adapting to the “acculturative” relational processes of their host communities.

#### ABSTRACT

Although Africans living in Europe have undergone acculturation into European life, many African communities in Europe still engage in the translocation and entrenchment of African sociocultural and life-world practices in European spaces. Several motivating factors account for these practices, e.g., identity maintenance, nostalgia, respect for cultural norms of interaction, socioeconomic survival, and in-group building for social cohesion and communion. Members of this group, especially first generation immigrants, are constantly straddling two (or more) worlds: the world of the home country and the world of the current host country. They are perpetually reconciling, negotiating, and reconstructing both worlds in a bid to create “home” within the new (European) space. The older generations of Africans are driven by a desire to preserve their cultural identity and also ensure that their children do not lose the traditional values of the home space or completely replace them with those of the current host home. This panel seeks critical and reflective contributions that explore how Africans living in Europe maintain their connection with their original sociocultural roots while adapting to the “acculturative” relational processes of their host communities. Focus should be on one or more of the following thematic leads: -Religion: African forms of religious practice in Europe -Economy: Micro finances: Àjo (Nigeria), Njangi/tontine (Cameroon) -Culture: Afro culture, music festivals, African cuisine -Social life: Wedding, birth and death celebrations -Language: bi-/multilingualism, language choice practices Abstracts that address these practices from interdisciplinary (cultural, diasporic, linguistic, literary, sociological, etc.) perspectives are particularly encouraged

### Afropolitan Sounds and Texts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Sylvia Antonia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (Uganda) & Sunniva Hovde (Norway)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores sounds and texts from diverse disciplinary perspectives. It examines how texts and sounds articulate identity and belonging and resist capitalism, authoritarianism, and colonialism within African social and political spaces.

#### ABSTRACT

In Africa, music and oral literature such as songs, chants, poetry, and everyday language use are deeply intertwined with politics. Understanding the multiple registers of orality is crucial for being part of a community, a political party, or forming one's identity (Gunner 2020). Music and poetry create affective alliances that enhance connection, collaboration, and resistance, which are also expressed through language choices and images of the 'semiotic landscape' (Gunther and van Leeuwen 2020). Barber (2007) argues that African resistance against colonialism is facilitated by audiences forming through oral texts, affirming shared values. Language and oral text are catalysts for radical institutional changes and help the formation of communities and political identities, reflecting and affecting social and political life. Music and songs have been central in creating a Pan-African identity after colonialism, but decolonial sound and text vary across Africa's diverse cultures. This panel explores sound and text through transdisciplinary and transcultural studies, including artists and activists. We pause and listen to sounds and utterances, slow our analytical habits, and expand our imaginaries through collaborative exchange. We aim to understand how sounds and texts address transformations caused by colonialism, capitalism, extractivism, and authoritarianism. We examine how oral text and sound ontologies connect local concerns of Pan-African identity, Afrofuturism, and Afropolitanism, linking colonial pasts to contemporary realities and intertwining personal and political narratives. The panel also asks how these expressions empower new, decolonial/anticolonial imaginaries and world-making practices.

### Afropolitizing cultural and creative industries in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Rufai Haruna Kilu (Ghana) & Lilian Atanga Lem (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the cosmopolitan outlooks of cultural & creative industries to reimagine and reconfigure Africa's transformation. Themes include cultural hybridity, careers, creative expressions, African identity formation and African bond.

#### ABSTRACT

Global conversations on Africa's transformation agenda focus on minerals and extractive industries, paying very little attention to the cultural and creative industries. In recent times, the cultural and creative industries on the continent have grown in fundamental ways, provoking scholarly discourse about their meaning and relevance for identities, development and nation building. In view of this, there is a growing recognition of the traditional African fabrics in the fashion industry, Afrobeats genre in the music scene, the Nollywood in filmmaking industry and African art and craft, which is contributing to putting Africa on the world map. Moreover, a suite of individual and collective effort to modernize, urbanize and to cosmopolite the sector is ongoing due to their suitability and potential impact on the African economies. This panel explores afropolitan discourses, expressions, imaginations and practices of the cultural and creative industries and how they are shaping African transformation. Contributions are invited from across the continent and from a wide range of interdisciplinary backgrounds to analyze how afropolitanism is shaping future aspirations and trajectories of creative artists engaged in the traditional African fabrics, fashion, film, theatre, music, the visual arts etc. Particular themes of interest include but are not limited to: cultural hybridity, careers, creative expressions, African identity formation and African bond discourses. We hope to contribute to greater understanding and conceptualization on how the creative and cultural industries in Africa are assuming modern and urban outlooks to reimagine and reconfigure Africa's transformation.

## Artistic Exchanges in the Global Cold War: Eastern Bloc-Northern Africa, 1940s–1980s

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Katarzyna Falecka (United Kingdom) & Przemysław Strożek (Poland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores how transregional artistic exchanges between countries of the former Eastern Bloc and Northern Africa shaped modern art during the Global Cold War.

### ABSTRACT

The panel explores how transregional artistic exchanges between countries of the former Eastern Bloc and Northern Africa shaped modern art during the Global Cold War. Transregional encounters of artists ensured the transfer of ideas and inspired debates on what it meant to be modern in the aftermath of the Second World War and during decolonisation struggles. During the Global Cold War, fine art students from Northern Africa arrived in the Eastern Bloc as part of university exchanges and to attend International Youth and Student Festivals designed to cement anti-western, anti-colonial, and socialist alliances. Northern African artists exhibited in the Eastern Bloc, while their European counterparts participated in art festivals and took up teaching roles in fine art departments across Northern Africa. The panel aims to understand how this cross-regional mobility shaped the practices of modern artists working across these geographies. Attending to questions of hybridity, cultural transfers, translation, and mistranslation, it is committed to unravelling the cosmopolitan nature of modern art in two regions whose cultural production, contrary to that of the 'West', is rarely analysed through a transregional lens. *Artistic Exchanges during the Global Cold War* aims to understand the situated dimensions through which the Global Cold War was experienced and examine how cross-cultural artistic interactions played out 'on the ground', against the backdrop of state-sanctioned cultural politics. We invite papers on any aspect of artistic exchanges between the former Eastern Bloc and Northern African countries.

## Bring Back African Artefacts (BBAA): The Impact of Scholarly Advocacy in Shaping Global Discourse

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Philip Egbule (Nigeria) & Ifeoma Odinye (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel aims to foster a deeper understanding of the critical role that scholarly advocacy plays in the repatriation of African artefacts and to inspire further academic contributions to this important movement.

### ABSTRACT

The repatriation of African artefacts, looted or otherwise acquired during colonial times, remains a pivotal issue in global cultural discourse. The ongoing discourse surrounding the repatriation of African artefacts has garnered global attention, with scholars playing a pivotal role in advocating for the return of cultural heritage to its rightful owners. This panel will explore the impact of scholarly advocacy in shaping the global narrative on artefact repatriation, highlighting the ways in which academic research, publications, and public intellectualism have influenced policy decisions, international relations, and public opinion. By examining key case studies and analyzing the contributions of African scholars, this panel will demonstrate how scholarly "voices in the ink," have amplified the call for justice and restitution, challenging colonial legacies and promoting cultural sovereignty. We seek for papers that argues that academic advocacy is not only crucial in advancing the repatriation agenda but also in fostering a more equitable and respectful global cultural exchange. Through a multidisciplinary approach, this panel will underscore the transformative power of scholarship in the ongoing efforts to return Africa's stolen heritage and redefines the role of academia in global cultural politics. This panel is designed for scholars, policymakers, museum professionals, students, and anyone interested in the intersection of cultural heritage, colonial history, and global justice. The repatriation of African artefacts is a complex and multifaceted issue, deeply intertwined with questions of justice, identity, and cultural sovereignty.

## Colonial Legacies, Post-independence Challenges: The Enduring Struggle of (Re)defining African Identities and Belongings in African Museums

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** David Mbutia (Kenya) & Chloé Josse-Durand (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel discusses how African museums, shaped by colonial legacies, have struggled to redefine national and cultural identities post-independence. It explores how these institutions can reflect the hybrid identities of African societies by reflecting local and inclusive expressions of belonging.

### ABSTRACT

This panel fits under the theme "African, Afropolitan, and Afropean Belongings and Identities" by addressing how African museums, originally shaped by colonial legacies, have struggled to redefine national and cultural identities post-independence.

African museums were originally established to serve the interests of colonial regimes, often excluding and misrepresenting local identities. Despite gaining independence, many African museums continue to face challenges in redefining and representing diverse national and sub-national identities, a reflection of their complex colonial legacies. This panel will explore how, over sixty years since independence, many African museums strive for local relevance amidst lingering colonial frameworks that continue to marginalize African communities.

The panel aims to discuss how post-colonial societies struggle to redefine cultural heritage, as discussed by Abungu and Ndoro (2023). African museums must confront their colonial foundations, which propagated exclusionary practices to reflect the diverse, globalized identities of modern African societies.

The panel also aims to discuss how museums can evolve to better reflect the dynamic, diverse identities of post-colonial African nations. Modernist approaches suggest that museums, through national symbols, education systems, and mass communication, play a role in constructing communal identities. Institutions like the Mutare Museum in Zimbabwe have indeed started collaborative efforts to become agents of social change (Chipangura & Mataga, 2021). By engaging with modernist theories that view identity as socially constructed, the panel explores how museums can better serve as platforms for expressions of belonging, moving beyond colonial frameworks to represent the complex, hybrid identities of contemporary African and diasporic communities.

## Decolonial approaches in relation to collecting and archiving human remains and (im)material culture pertaining to Sub-Saharan Africans and Afropeans in Europe

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Bambi Ceuppens (Belgium) & Diana Salakheddin (Belgium)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

What are the challenges concerning decolonial practices in relation to the 'heritage' of people of Sub-Saharan African descent in Europe held in public and private organisations and associations?

### ABSTRACT

This panel is concerned with the challenges concerning decolonial practices in relation to the 'heritage' (itself a contested term) of people of Sub-Saharan African descent in Europe held in public and private institutions, organisations and associations: human remains, collections and archives relating to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and immigration before, during and after the colonial era, with particular attention to Afropean curators and archivists dealing with this 'heritage', from contested collections and archives in public institutions to private initiatives by Afropeans to create their own collections and archives.



## Exhibiting Restitution: Approaches, potentials and challenges

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Ferdinand De Jong (Germany) & Fiona Siegenthaler (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Questions about restitution impact the public perception of museums. In this panel, we present and discuss restitution-related exhibitions and in what ways they offer critical perspectives on the production of knowledge, curatorial practice and their impact on public perceptions.

### ABSTRACT

Questions about restitution impact the public perception of museums. Although not all collections from former colonies were looted, stolen, or otherwise illegitimately obtained, the public often imagines they were. Yet, the histories of collections and the related curatorial practices tend to be a bit more complex. Given their implication in the making of coloniality at large, museums are subject to equally indicting views especially by decolonial theorists who consider the museum as instruments of racial theory. Against this background, the museum faces multiple challenges to re-consider its very *raison d'être* and convey it to its audiences. This panel examines how the restitution debate is communicated in exhibitions and what theoretical and practical implications such exhibitions have.

In response to the current debates and to the effective implementation of restitution, museums are staging exhibitions on the restitution process. What curatorial challenges do museums face in mounting these exhibitions? Who do they collaborate with and how? How do legal frameworks and professional best practices inform the curatorial process? What purposes are pursued and how are they conveyed? What role is attributed to the objects themselves? And what perspectives do such exhibitions offer for future curatorial practice and theory? These questions address practical issues as much as epistemological and theoretical questions regarding restitution. In this panel we present and discuss examples of restitution-related exhibitions and in what ways they offer critical perspectives on the production of knowledge, curatorial practice and their impact on public perceptions.

## Identity, gender, “race” and class in African, Afropolitan and Afropean consciousness: Navigating a common ground in contemporary literary and aesthetic formats

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Omotayo Oloruntoba-Oju (Nigeria) & Tosin Gbogi (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how Africans and Europeans navigate the intersection between gender, “race,” class and identity politics, and how this navigation is represented in contemporary literary and aesthetic forms. We examine this north-south intersection in literature, film, video and social media.

### ABSTRACT

Multiple perspectives on gender, race and sexuality persist on African-European relations both on the African continent and in the African-European Diaspora, reflecting both commonalities and disparities in African, Afropolitan and Afropean consciousnesses. More importantly, these perspectives influence patterns of intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic (north-south) interactions. While migration everywhere is famously provoked by “push/pull” factors, the modalities of interactions in new localities or new spaces are far from stable. The intersection of gender, sexuality, race, and class between Africa and Europe is shaped by complex historical, political, and socio-economic power dynamics. In short, these intersections are prominently influenced by colonial legacy and the associated baggage of economic disparity, lopsided migration patterns, linguistic inequality and uneven cultural exchanges. Is there a common ground?

This panel is interested how Africans and Europeans navigate the intersections above, and how the navigation is represented in different formats—through plain, scholarly, symbolic or aesthetic modes of expression. In other words, how are the variables of gender, race and class involving African and European interactions represented in African and European art forms (including literature, film, video and social media)?

Contributions that traverse the themes of translocal identity, gender and sexuality, intersectional communication, migration and diaspora are most welcome. What are the prominent patterns of conflict generation and conflict resolution in representative African and European literature, theatre, film and social media? Does the resolution of conflict involving gender, race, class or even speech (language) orient towards “home,” “abroad,” or reflect translocal spaces and in-betweenness in these representations?

### Negotiating Afro-Diasporan Identities and a Sense of Cultural Belonging

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** **Adwoa Owusuaa Bobie** (Ghana) & **Zainab Musa Shallangwa** (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel discusses how the sense of identity and cultural belonging have shifted over the years among African diasporans who migrated from the continent to the West and the next generation who were born and raised in the West.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel interrogates cultural identity and belonging among African diasporans in America and Europe. We are interested in understanding how the sense of identity and cultural belonging have shifted over the years among African diasporans who migrated from the continent to the West and the next generation who were born and raised in the West. The former is characterized by negotiating their identity from the point of their African origin given they spent their formative years in their home countries and continue to hold significant relational ties to the continent, while the latter, born in the West, try to navigate the blurring contours of African identity with little to no significant relational ties to the continent. Drawing on a qualitative study conducted in Ottawa, Canada, we found that the two groups of Africans face different realities of Afro identities and cultural integration. Issues of family and community support, structural support, integration, racial identity, cultural awareness, and gender dynamics play out differently for each cohort. Although different, the two generations are not treated as mutually exclusive but we acknowledge the transitional link as the older generation tries to transfer their cultural knowledge to the younger generation and provides support for identity awareness and afro-community integration both in their country of origin and their country of birth. Within the spectrum of transfers, there are conflicts and clashes of knowledge that influence identity. This panel will discuss the nuances of negotiating cultural identity as an African immigrant and as a Western-born African

## Rethinking Afropolitanism and Decoloniality: Negotiating African Identities and Knowledge Productions in the 21st Century

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Arts and Culture

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Olupemi Oludare (the Netherlands) & Ayokunu Adedokun (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites discussions that critically examine Afropolitan and decolonial consciousness through the pluriversity of African and cosmopolitan identities, knowledge productions, and the entangled histories, cultures, belongings, and mobilities between Africa and Europe.

### ABSTRACT

Afropolitanism as an Afro-cosmopolitan consciousness has been “fostered by recent histories of migration and globalization” (Balakrishnan, 2019). Afropolitanism celebrates African identities and knowledge productions as cultural hybridities and divergences from Pan-African unilateral conception of Afrocentric stance and identity. It promotes Afropolitan identities as the ‘new’ African diaspora; an “effort to understand what is ailing in Africa alongside the desire to honour what is wonderful, unique” (Selasi 2005). However, the consciousness over African ailing issues, identity, and knowledge productions was germane to the decolonization efforts of the pre/post/independence eras, albeit now advocated as a decoloniality movement. Hence, “the conflation of decolonization and decoloniality stems from the belief that the latter does the natural duty that follows the attainment of the former (Falola, 2024)”. While the decolonial movement, like Afropolitanism, celebrates African multicultural identities and knowledge productions, it also advocates for epistemic resistance, relinking, and reconstruction against the coloniality of being, power, and knowledge (Ibid.). Consequently, scholars have embraced Afropolitanism and decoloniality as African ‘plural consciousness’, identifying the global significance of their pluriversity, mediated through the diplomacy of conviviality (Nyamnjoh and Ingrid 2014; Taiwo 2022; Anugwom 2023). This panel seeks to interrogate the global significance of these ‘somewhat’ intertwined consciousness, exploring how they shape and are shaped by the ongoing transnational entanglements between Africa and Europe. We welcome papers that explore the hybridities of identity and knowledge production in/of African and cosmopolitan spaces, examining how the entangled histories, cultures, economics, socio-political formations, and environment are continuously negotiated through location, mobility, and belonging.

## Economy and Development

### African Perspectives on the EU's Global Green Ambitions: Resources, Identity, and Strategy

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Ricardo Reboredo (Czech Republic) & Mohamed Jaouad Malzi (Morocco)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how African nations perceive, influence and challenge the EU's green transition ambitions. It examines the economic and geopolitical dynamics of resource diplomacy, focusing on African perspectives, strategic interests, and their impact on EU climate goals.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel offers a critical examination of the economic and geopolitical dynamics between African nations and the European Union (EU) in the context of the global green transition. It seeks to illuminate how African perspectives on critical resources influence and challenge European ambitions, particularly the EU's goal to become the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. As the EU aims to secure green energy sources and critical raw minerals, predominantly found in Africa, this panel will explore the entanglements and negotiations that shape these interactions.

We will analyze how African nations, with their substantial reserves of essential resources, engage with the European Green Deal's external dimension. This investigation is situated within the broader framework of African, Afropolitan, and Afropean forms of belonging and positioning. The panel will address questions such as:

- How do African countries perceive and respond to the EU's green ambitions in the context of their own developmental and strategic interests?
- In what ways do the geopolitical maneuvers of global players like the EU, USA, China and others impact African nations and their strategic positioning?
- How do these dynamics reshape African-European relations and influence broader discourses of identity, belonging, and resource control?

The panel will critically assess how African countries navigate the competition for their resources, revealing how their strategies and responses contribute to reshaping the EU's green transition efforts. This discussion will highlight the multifaceted nature of African-European entanglements, addressing how these geopolitical and environmental intersections reflect broader themes of identity, belonging, and geopolitical positioning.

## Climate justice in Africa: advancing indigenous knowledge and green financing for vulnerable communities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Njideka Nwawih Charlotte Ojukwu (South Africa) & Saturday U. Omeluzor, (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Panel aimed on how indigenous knowledge can enhance climate resilience and provide solutions for better access to green financing, crucial for achieving climate justice in Africa. The impacts of climate change have exacerbated existing inequalities in marginalized communities.

### ABSTRACT

The significant effects of climate change on indigenous and marginalized populations throughout Africa have intensified pre-existing disparities on accessibility of information and sustainable financing. The obstacles that communities encounter in acquiring vital resources and knowledge that could bolster their resilience and adaptation initiatives cannot be overemphasized. Indigenous knowledge systems have historically informed communities on the stewardship of their natural resources and the maintenance of their livelihoods that receive inadequate attention in predominant climate discussions. However, the amalgamation of contemporary scientific methodologies has the potential to yield innovative solutions to the intricate environmental dilemmas confronting Africa in the present day (Smith & Waller, 2020).

Notwithstanding, indigenous frameworks remain sidelined, perhaps due to none access to venues to authenticate and disseminate such knowledge. This panel will tackle these concerns by scrutinizing how indigenous knowledge can be effectively incorporated into climate adaptation methodologies, and how financial entities and policymakers can guarantee sustainable financing of the most disenfranchised demographics. Employing a multidisciplinary strategy, the panel will convene scholars, activists, and practitioners to deliberate on methods for surmounting the systemic obstacles that impede access to both knowledge and funding in confronting climate change. This panel aimed to yield vital insight and to highlight how indigenous knowledge can enhance climate resilience and provide recommendations for better access to green financing, crucial for achieving climate justice in Africa. The severe impacts of climate change have exacerbated existing inequalities in information access and sustainable financing among indigenous and marginalized communities in Africa.

## Critical Raw Minerals and the Green Transition: African Identities, Environmental Justice, and the Global Economy

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Tereza Němečková (Czech Republic) & Clement Sichimwa (Zambia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines Africa's role in the global green economy, focusing on the impacts of CRMs mining. It explores how this affects African identities, challenges green growth narratives, and highlights alternative pathways for sustainable development while addressing historical inequalities.

### ABSTRACT

As global efforts intensify toward achieving net-zero emissions and transitioning to green technologies, Africa's role as a provider of critical raw minerals (CRMs) has gained unprecedented significance. However, while the official discourse largely portrays CRMs as essential to a green future, the impact of the massive increase in mineral mining across Africa remains understudied. Similarly, the efforts of African states to integrate into new global CRMs value chains while avoiding the perpetuation of past challenges and exploring alternative pathways to achieve a sustainable future are yet to be explored.

This panel explores the implications of Africa's integration into the global green economy, focusing on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of CRMs mining in Africa. Equally important, it seeks to explore the perceptions of key African stakeholders regarding the new concept of 'green growth.' Through interdisciplinary perspectives, the panel examines how this transition affects African, Afropolitan, and Afropean forms of belonging, challenging dominant narratives of green growth while highlighting alternative pathways for sustainable development. It critically engages with the conference theme by exploring how the global demand for Africa's natural resources, driven by the green transition, influences notions of African belonging and identity. The panel interrogates the complex dynamics between local communities, global markets, and environmental policies, shedding light on the reproduction of historical inequalities under new 'green' discourses. By examining these issues through the lens of political economy, the panel contributes to the broader discourse on Africa's positioning within global socio-economic systems, addressing questions of identity, justice, and sustainability.

## Decolonisation in South Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Mvuselelo Ngcoya (South Africa) & Shauna Mottiar (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel is focused on the decoloniality debate in South Africa spanning scholarly work in education and research, language, indigenous knowledge systems, socioeconomic rights, land rights, political and economic systems and civil society.

### ABSTRACT

The decolonisation debate in South Africa was ignited in 2015 following the ‘Fees Must Fall’ campaign led by the student movement. This movement and the debates surrounding it reflected the unfulfilled promises of democracy and highlighted the ways in which the domination of formerly colonised people may have been removed but the dominant ideas of former colonisers remain. It has been noted (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) that when decolonisation is limited to juridical-political approaches formerly colonised people are merely transferred from ‘colonialism’ to ‘coloniality’. South Africa’s much celebrated transition to democracy therefore appears as ‘an illusion that yields neither decolonisation nor social justice or freedom’ (Kepe and Hall, 2018:130). This panel invites submissions of decolonial scholarly work from South Africa. It welcomes submissions on education and research, language, indigenous knowledge systems, socioeconomic rights, land rights, political and economic systems and civil society.



## Digitalization and the future of decent work in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Evans Awuni (Germany) & Edwin Ameso (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how digitalization (e.g., via automation, gig work, and AI), reshapes African labour markets, examining the impact of informality, low social protection, and skills deficits on achieving decent work. It also discusses responses from individuals, governments, and key stakeholders.

### ABSTRACT

The African labour market is characterized by high informality, a limited social protection net, gender disparities, and significant gaps in decent work opportunities. The onset of digitalization introduces both risks and opportunities for addressing these persistent structural issues. For example, digitalization is rapidly expanding Africa's gig economy, where flexible, on-demand jobs often come with weak or non-existent social protection. As digital platforms such as ride-hailing, delivery, and freelance services proliferate, traditional employment models (especially those providing pensions, healthcare, and unemployment benefits) are eroding. We will investigate how gig workers are navigating this precarious labour market and examine policy responses aimed at extending social protection to this growing workforce. This session will explore how the digital transformation is affecting job availability and quality across the continent, how digital platforms are either perpetuating informality or offering new routes toward job formalization and innovative approaches to skill development, particularly for those in low-wage and informal sectors. This panel will contribute to ongoing debates around the future of decent work in Africa by offering a critical analysis of how digitalization interacts with the continent's unique labour market structures.

### Dismantling the Resource Curse: Decolonizing Development to Tackle Inequality and Climate Vulnerability in Sub-Saharan Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Tanja Kleibl (Germany) & Minenhle Matela (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Capitalist expansion and exploitation worsen poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. This panel critiques the development aid industry, advocating for conflict-sensitive, participatory frameworks to empower marginalized communities and decolonize relationships among stakeholders, emphasizing local knowledges

#### ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, the intersection of capitalist expansion, democratization efforts, and resource extraction has deepened poverty and inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa. This has had severe implications for marginalized communities, where the combined forces of neo-colonial resource exploitation, political struggle, and environmental crises have led to heightened internal displacement, refugee flows, and socio-economic dislocation. These dynamics have exacerbated socio-political tensions, reinforcing harmful power structures and intensifying conflicts. For example, in South Africa, the legacy of apartheid continues to shape inequality, with neo-liberal extractive industries playing a major role in sustaining economic divisions. In Mozambique, resource discoveries have led to external interventions and internal conflict, especially in the north, further destabilizing the country. Both nations face the compounded effects of climate-induced disasters, resource competition, and social fragmentation, which have made traditional development approaches insufficient. This panel calls for a critical re-examination of the development aid industry, international social work, and development cooperation in regions impacted by these overlapping crises. A conflict-sensitive, participatory framework is essential for promoting democratic processes and empowering marginalized communities. The key challenge is to decolonize relationships between international actors, local institutions, and communities, dismantling colonial legacies and avoiding the reinforcement of existing inequalities. By exchanging ideas on research strategies and methodologies, the panel seeks to explore more effective approaches to humanitarian and development work. Prioritizing locally informed and contextually grounded methods can ensure that interventions address both immediate needs and contribute to long-term structural transformation, fostering social justice and equitable development in conflict-affected regions.

### Exploring multi-dimensional inequalities in Africa: intersectionality, power, and development

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Wojciech Tycholiz (Poland) & Dominik Kopiński (Poland)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines multi-dimensional inequalities in Africa, exploring how intersecting factors like gender, ethnicity, and geography shape lived experiences of inequality. Through diverse case studies, it addresses the structural roots and impacts on development and policy interventions.

#### ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the study of inequalities in Africa has shifted from a single-dimensional focus on income to a more multi-dimensional understanding, including factors like gender, ethnicity, education, and geographical location (Mbembe 2021). This panel seeks to explore the complexity of inequalities across different African societies, examining how diverse forms of disadvantage intersect and exacerbate each other. Drawing from intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989), we will investigate how overlapping social identities contribute to the lived experiences of inequality, focusing on African contexts where race, gender, class, and location converge.

Economic inequalities are often intertwined with political exclusion and cultural marginalisation, limiting access to resources and opportunities (Fanon 1961; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Recent studies have emphasised the importance of disaggregating data by social categories to better understand these inequalities (UNDP 2019). This panel will feature papers that address multi-dimensional inequalities in different African regions, critically engaging with case studies, theoretical and conceptual papers, regional comparative papers; and papers on policy dimensions of inequality and its reduction.

By bringing together scholars with diverse methodological approaches, we aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of how various forms of inequality affect development outcomes and contribute to the persistence of structural injustice. The panel will also explore potential policy interventions aimed at addressing these inequalities, from grassroots movements to state-level reforms

## From agricultural knowledge to innovation and adoption: empowering smallholder farmers

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Theodore Asimeng (Germany) & Benjamin Abugri (Ghana)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The path from agricultural knowledge to innovation and adoption involves a multi-step process integrating research, technology, and farming processes. This panel unites experts from various disciplines to discuss ways to strengthen innovation and adoption among African smallholder farmers.

### ABSTRACT

Knowledge on agriculture and food systems covering resource availability, soil health, crop and animal productivity, pest and disease management, labour, markets, prices and costs, nutrition and food safety, is crucial for developing innovative solutions to enhance these systems. At the stage of primary production, improving the lives of farmers and fostering ecological sustainability are gaining particular attention. Innovations such as conservation agriculture, integrated soil fertility management, or new alternative rice production methods have been developed using much knowledge. However, smallholder farmers who contribute about 80% of crop production in sub-Saharan Africa and still provide more than 50% of total employment adopt innovations much less quickly and intensely than larger farmers. Factors such as specific resource requirements attached to the innovation adoption itself, additional requirements to reorganise farms and farming practices beyond the direct innovation, and limitations from socio-cultural reasons hinder smallholders' adoption of innovations. Smallholders, therefore, require tailored support systems. Since the journey from agricultural knowledge to practical innovation and adoption involves a multi-step process where research, technology and farming processes converge to improve productivity and ensure sustainability, this panel unites experts from various disciplines – from agricultural sciences, and engineering, to social sciences - to discuss measures for strengthening innovation systems and adoption among African smallholder farmers. This will focus on three key challenges: (i) mainstreaming Indigenous knowledge through participatory processes (ii) promoting gender-responsive innovations, and (iii) fostering youth-specific solutions.

## From fossil fuels to critical minerals: exploring the extractive dimensions of the energy transition in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** **Gerald Arhin** (United Kingdom) & **Matthew Tyce** (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks to explore the manifest ways in which African nations – both individually and collectively – are navigating the complex terrain of extractivism within the context of the energy transition, whether in relation to traditional fossil fuels or emergent ‘green’ minerals.

### ABSTRACT

The global decarbonisation agenda is fundamentally reconfiguring patterns and paradigms of extractive governance. Africa, replete with both ‘green’ and carbon-intensive resources, will simultaneously shape and be shaped by the agenda. This dialectical relationship is manifesting in the scramble for Africa’s critical minerals, which is threatening to deepen existing processes of extractivism across the continent but may also—in an era of growing geopolitical competition—offer a route for African countries to challenge neocolonial power structures and economic dependencies and promote greater value-addition domestically. Concurrently, hydrocarbon-rich African polities are grappling with existential challenges of fossil fuel divestment and stranded assets, but also increasingly coming together to try and strike common negotiating positions at international climate fora—including around gas as Africa’s supposed ‘transition fuel’—and devise new supranational organisations like the Africa Energy Bank to support these visions.

This panel seeks to explore the manifold ways in which African nations, both individually and collectively, are navigating the complex terrain of extractivism within the context of the energy transition. We encourage papers from various (inter)disciplinary perspectives that address, inter alia, the geopolitical implications of Africa’s (critical) mineral wealth, tensions between national development agendas and global climate imperatives, or the role that regional and continental collaborations can play in shaping more African-centric (and -beneficial) modes of resource governance. We are also interested in socio-cultural and ideational dimensions of the energy transition, including how critical mineral extraction is resonating with local communities and contributing to the (re)construction of African identities at various scales, including Pan-African visions and ideals.

## Industrial Aspirations: Decline, Revival, and Reappropriation in African Manufacturing

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Anna-Riikka Kauppinen (Switzerland) & Yonatan N. Gez (Portugal)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

While the promises of industrialization in post-independence Africa largely remained unrealized, signs of reinvestment in manufacturing are emerging. This panel invites papers exploring the histories, aspirations, and lived experiences of African industrial decline, revival, and reappropriation.

### ABSTRACT

Industrialization long encapsulated ideas about African development, sovereignty, and economic freedom. From colonial-era factory unions inspiring resistance movements to postcolonial industrial projects spearheading pan-African economic growth (Nkrumah 1963), the image of the thriving African factory stirs ideas about self-sufficiency and resilience. Following the debt crises and the SAPs, the continent's current share of global industrial manufacturing stands at merely 2% (ADB 2020). Many historical factories fell into decay, entangled in webs of imperial and post-colonial politics and feeding nostalgic sentiments. From market women who complain that "we even import toothpicks from China" to finance ministers grappling with trade deficits due to extensive imports of manufactured goods, many feel the material and political stakes of deindustrialization.

Today, there are signs of industrial reinvestment, from pledges by the African Development Bank to state-led initiatives and public-private partnerships to (re)build factories and designate special economic zones for manufacturing. Critics argue that, in the age of AI and automation, Africa should bypass heavy industrialization in favor of high-tech and service-oriented sectors, a strategy known as 'leapfrogging' (see Bloom 2024). Moreover, the language of self-sufficiency is suspected as naïve, considering African industries' longstanding entanglement within global networks of ownership and speculative capital, where stakeholders from multinational banks to political parties exert decisive power.

This panel invites contemporary and historical papers exploring aspirations, strategic visions, and lived experiences of African industrial decline, revival, and reappropriation. Mindful of lasting transregional industrial entanglements with Europe and other regions, papers that consider such ties and legacies are especially welcome.

## Negotiating Transnational Regulation: African Responses to Global Regulatory Capitalism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Ahmed Fouad EL HADDAD (France) & Habib Khadraoui (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel critically examines the power imbalances of global regulatory capitalism and how African public regulators, private sector actors, and local communities confront, resist, and adapt to transnational regulations in sectors like agriculture, energy, and health.

### ABSTRACT

This panel examines the dynamics of regulatory capitalism in Africa, focusing on how transnational regulatory regimes intersect with local contexts. As African markets integrate into the global economy, they confront increasingly stringent regulations—such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and environmental standards—shaped by Global North actors. Regulatory capitalism refers to governance through a network of rules and standards, where public and private actors construct regulatory frameworks influencing access to markets. Compliance with complex regulatory mechanisms becomes essential for international trade, reflecting a power imbalance that disadvantages African producers and regulators. These frameworks have intensified in response to global challenges like climate change, pandemics, and food security crises, disproportionately impacting Africa.

The panel investigates the strategies African actors—state regulators, private sector, and local communities—use to navigate, contest, and adapt to external regulatory pressures. Hybrid governance models emerge where global standards intersect with local practices, embedding public and private regulatory approaches in diverse African economic, cultural, and socio-ecological contexts. These negotiations between global and local actors highlight how regulatory pluralism takes shape through contested processes of rule-making, enforcement, and adaptation in the governance of African markets.

We encourage research through case studies in agriculture, health, energy, and environmental governance. Contributions from political economy, socio-legal studies, international relations, and development studies are welcome to examine how global regulatory standards are negotiated and reinterpreted within local practices.

## Networks of opportunity? Everyday brokerage, trade, and cooperation in South-South engagement in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Elisa Gambino (United Kingdom) & Costanza Franceschini (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the networks and formations emerging from growing South-South engagement across different African contexts, focusing on the roles of intermediaries and brokers, business and political networks, as well as spaces and places linking different development cooperation spheres.

### ABSTRACT

The global geography of development has witnessed a profound shift, whereby processes and practices historically dominated by North-South interactions are increasingly centred around South-South cooperation. The growing centrality of Southern countries and actors, such as China or Turkey, to African development have brought to the forefront new questions around the nature of these emerging forms of international development cooperation. While South-South cooperation promises to be centred around “win-win” and to address some of the unequal relations that have characterised North-South engagement, questions remain around the ways in which this manifest in the everyday realities. The emergence of Southern-centred development paradigms is indeed shaping the contexts, practices, and modalities through which development processes take place in African nations. This panel wants to explore the networks and formations emerging from growing South-South engagement across different African contexts. Specifically, it focuses on the roles of intermediaries and brokers, business and political networks, as well as spaces and places linking different development cooperation spheres. We are particularly interested in submissions that examine how everyday (business) interactions between local brokers and foreign actors and the presence of transnational business networks foster the expansion of Southern firms in African markets, also creating opportunities for local companies and gatekeepers. We therefore invite contributions focused on different iterations of South-South encounters, including (but not limited to) China-Africa, Turkey-Africa, and Brazil-Africa relations, and drawing from a range of disciplines (such as development studies, geography, anthropology, political economy). We privilege contributions based on qualitative and ethnographic research methods.



## Precarious work: Multiple African realities and entanglements

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Akosua Darkwah (Ghana) & Katherine Gough (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will examine precarious work across the African continent and beyond through analysing different sectors, social groups and regions to highlight how colonial and post-colonial relations and rising political, economic, societal, and environmental uncertainty are shaping work precarity.

### ABSTRACT

Across the African continent and beyond, work is becoming increasingly precarious linked to colonial and post-colonial positioning of economies within global production systems and rising political, economic, societal, and environmental uncertainty. Such precarity is widespread but especially prevalent in sectors such as the creative industries, fisheries, mining, agriculture and urban informal economies. This panel will explore the multiple African realities and entanglements of work precarity across sectors, social groups and regions. The intersecting causes and experiences of, as well as responses to, work precarity will be discussed. Papers are welcomed that take methodologically innovative and critically reflective perspectives that transcend disciplinary boundaries to help challenge and advance understandings of precarious work in African contexts. Studies that question established global North conceptualisations and theorise from Africa are especially welcome. We encourage submissions from diverse African contexts on themes including but not limited to:

- How history, culture, politics, economy, social formation and the environment affect experiences of belonging and exclusion in precarious work
- Ways in which African-European relations and entanglements shape work precarity
- Regionally specific struggles and their impact on precarious work
- The role of the post-colonial state and employers in shaping work precarity
- How analytical categories, including class, ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexuality, language and religion, intersect and influence experiences and perceptions of work precarity
- Organizing or being mobile to reduce work precarity
- The impact of personal backgrounds, identities, privileges and positioning on knowledge constructions of precarious work.

### Reimagining Economies: Transformative Perspectives on Informality across Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** **Marta Massera** (France) & **Tom De Herdt** (Belgium)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel will explore informality's multifaceted patterns across Africa and challenge our thinking about informal economic practices. By examining their local embeddedness in the face of global transformations, it will reveal evidence of alternative socio-economic systems based on such practices.

#### ABSTRACT

The panel “Reimagining Economies: Transformative Perspectives on Informality across Africa” will explore the multifaceted patterns of informality in the African continent as a product of the neoliberal development model but also as a potential means for transcending it. We will do so by challenging dominant knowledge in economics and economic policy and drawing on context-sensitive comparisons based on ongoing research with fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, and Zambia.

Discussants will notably leverage informality to conceptualise alternative economic and socio-economic systems that ensure the social and physical reproduction of a large part of the population by relying on a different set of institutional arrangements compared to the formal economy. In doing this, they will seek to uncover how informality shapes and is shaped by local histories, cultures, politics, and socio-economic formations. Bottom-up perspectives will be incorporated to give voice to the witnesses of informal economic practices in local particularities, analysing informality in urban planning, housing, food supply, finance, and public services. We will also interrogate the interplay between informal economic practices and the broader conditions of late capitalism and deepen our understanding of the major transformations affecting African life-worlds, identity, and belonging in the face of contemporary global challenges.

This panel is promoted by the Africa working group of the MSCA project PRESILIENT to engage a broader network of experts on informality across Africa. PRESILIENT is a large network committed to carrying out research on informality in 15 countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

## Rural Belonging: Critical Insights on Tenure Security in Africa and the Global South

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Howard Stein (United States) & Laura German (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel will evaluate the concepts of tenure security and insecurity with a particular focus on critically interrogating dominant constructs and whether interventions in land governance have yielded the outcomes promised.

### ABSTRACT

Interventions carried out in the name of development are typically guided by theories of change, “a structured set of assumptions regarding how an intervention works (or is expected to work) and how it potentially influences processes of change” (Vaessen 2016). Yet these theories often fail to hold up against the evidence, rest on ontological assumptions that are deeply situated (historically, culturally) rather than universal, and often mask the real underlying agendas driving change. In the land governance arena, “tenure (in)security” is perhaps the key concept animating a suite of recent interventions, from legislative changes to land titling campaigns, new voluntary codes of conduct, performance metrics, and related flows of funding and claims to expertise. In part proponents like the World Bank argue that it is only through the legal recognition of land tenure that rural populations can “exercise their rights as contracting parties and citizens” (World Bank, 2005). Yet the questions of what exactly tenure security *is*, and whether interventions in its name have yielded the outcomes promised – including enhancing their sense of citizenship and belonging – remain contested. We are open to submissions representing diverse methodologies and disciplines. Papers need not focus on Africa alone. In line with the conference theme, we encourage papers that question, disturb or advance established global North paradigms on tenure security by theorizing from Africa and the global South. Papers accepted on the panel have the option of being considered for a special issue of the journal *Land* edited by the two panel organizers.

## The Travails and Trajectories of ‘Resource Nationalism’ in Southern and Eastern Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Richard Saunders (Canada) & Marja Hinfelaar (Zambia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

In the 2000s ‘resource nationalism’ (RN) swept through mineral exporting countries, carrying the promise of improved socio-economic benefits. Policy reforms led to uneven outcomes and intense contestation among stakeholders. This panel explores recent RN experiences in Southern and Eastern Africa.

### ABSTRACT

A wave of ‘resource nationalism’ (RN) swept through Eastern and Southern Africa in the 2000s in the wake of booming commodity prices, weak socio-economic benefits in mineral exporting countries, and rising demands for improved resource governance by domestic mining stakeholders. A period of intense policy debate and regulatory reforms ensued in the 2010s, producing uneven outcomes. This panel will explore the trajectories of RN debates, innovations and outcomes in the region and consider the diverse roles and impacts of stakeholders in advocating for, participating in and engaging with diverse reform interventions. It will investigate the experiences of RN’s intended beneficiaries, and ask what lessons have emerged from a decade of reforms. What new insights into RN have emerged from a decade of debate and policy making? Have RN-inflected policies facilitated meaningful change and enhanced local revenue, employment and supply chain benefits in the foreign-dominated sector? Have challenges involving the formalization and incorporation of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector been addressed? Have RN-related innovations contributed to a more sustainable form of extraction with improved local benefits? The panel invites comparative cases studies with the aim of better understanding the uneven and contradictory dynamics of RN, and the diverse political and structural obstacles to a more assertive approach to resource sovereignty at national level. It particularly welcomes research contributions involving stakeholder-driven interventions and imaginaries, and their impact within broader regulatory practices.

## Unsettling Economic Development? Understanding the Varieties of African Capitalisms

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Pritish Behuria (United Kingdom) & Sebastian Heinen (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Established development theories assume a static trajectory of economic transformation (from agriculture to industry to services). This panel invites submissions of grounded political economy analyses exploring macro- and sectoral development paths in Africa under contemporary globalisation.

### ABSTRACT

Most existing analyses of contemporary economic development trajectories in Africa have been judged based on comparison with idealised paths of East Asian and European development. Classically, this has focused on a romanticised celebration of manufacturing-oriented development. Though there may be substantial benefits with investing in manufacturing, most African countries have not developed along these lines. This panel aims to unsettle standard conceptions of economic development. It problematises such models by centring grounded analyses of how African economies are actually being transformed. In that sense, it aims to work in the disparate traditions of dependency and developmentalist scholars such as Samir Amin and Thandika Mkandawire.

This panel welcomes papers that empirically examine the contemporary trajectories of African economies. It invites papers that discuss the political vulnerabilities of these trajectories – either as single cases or from a comparative lens. Furthermore, varying effects on different factions and strata in society may be analysed, thereby exploring their impact on in-country inequality. A focus could be placed on the interplay and contestation between the interests and actions of various actors (state agencies, militaries, ruling elites, informal patron-client structures, domestic and foreign firms, development banks, international finance, donors, and grassroots organizations), as well as on the relation between actors and institutions, ideologies, and global and local exogenous factors and trends (e.g. climate change, financialization, changing geopolitical and geoeconomics structures). Success and failure paths of all economic sectors (e.g. agriculture and agro-processing, mining, construction, and manufacturing, and various service sectors) are of interest.

## Young Africans and digital belonging: Impact of social networks on the construction of contemporary African identities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Economy and Development

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Yacouba SANGARE (Mali) & Oumar Diandjo Traoré (Mali)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

In summary, it is an analysis of the tensions between cultural heritage and global influences, as well as the opportunities offered by social networks for the self-affirmation of young Africans.

### ABSTRACT

The rise of social networks has profoundly transformed the way in which young Africans construct and express identities. These platforms provide a space for sharing and exchange that transcends geographic and cultural boundaries, allowing young people to connect with peers across the continent and beyond. Social networks play a key role in redefining cultural affiliations. They facilitate the spread of diverse cultural expressions, ranging from music to fashion, while allowing users to reclaim their roots. This encourages a hybridization of identities, where young people navigate between tradition and modernity. However, this digital belonging also presents challenges. Exposure to global content can lead to a dilution of local cultures and a feeling of alienation. In addition, questions of representativeness and stereotypes persist, influencing the way young people perceive themselves and are perceived. In short, digital belonging offers young Africans a platform to assert their identity while confronting the tensions between cultural heritage and global influences. This dynamic highlights the importance of a critical and inclusive approach to understanding contemporary African identities. Drawing on documentary resources and field data, this article analyzes the impact of social networks on the construction of contemporary African identities.

## Environment and Geography

### (Southern) African Perspectives on Past and Present Nature Conservation in Global Contexts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Romie Nghitevelekwa (Namibia) & Luregn Lenggenhager (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Based on Africa's long and often contested experience, expertise and critical engagement with nature and wildlife conservation, this panel explores the use of concepts, theories, policies or case studies from (Southern) Africa to understand conservation contexts in other world regions.

#### ABSTRACT

Southern Africa is often regarded as the avant-garde of wildlife conservation, with many successful initiatives originating from the region. These initiatives involve partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities, and the private sector, as well as international collaborations for large-scale migrations of megafauna. These efforts have led to the creation of Transfrontier Conservation Areas, Communal Conservancies, and other notable conservation landscapes. However, these initiatives have also been criticized as continuations of South Africa's complex history of colonialism, racism, and inequality. Conservation has often been used by the powerful to control people.

Therefore both, nature conservation and the critique thereof, highlight a dual legacy of innovation and conflict. Based on this long and often contested experience, expertise and critical engagement with nature conservation and wildlife management in Africa, this panel explores the use of concepts, theories, policies or case studies from (Southern) Africa to better understand conservation contexts in other world regions. The aim is to test the applicability and comparability of experiences, practices, and theories from Southern Africa to their counterparts elsewhere, providing fresh perspectives on conservation in Africa and beyond. We welcome research that compares conservation histories, policies, theories and practices across different regions of the world and studies that apply African conservation experiences, knowledge and critique to other contexts. By encouraging a diverse range of perspectives and methodologies from or based on (Southern) Africa, this panel aims to challenge dominant conservation narratives, criticize European/global conservation models, and discuss more just and sustainable conservation practices on the continent and worldwide.

## Advancing Critical Mineral Sustainability: Innovative Technologies for Quantification, Traceability, and Responsible Resource Management

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Sandy Minkah Kyei (United Kingdom) & Solomon Oyewo (Finland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Amid rising demand for lithium, cobalt, and other rare earth minerals, this panel explores innovations in critical mineral quantification. We examine sustainable detection techniques and discuss development, deployment, and regulation across Africa, addressing both scientific and policy aspects.

### ABSTRACT

The growing global demand for resources such as lithium, cobalt, and silicon has led to significant challenges in sustainability, resource management, and responsible sourcing. Therefore, the need for sustainable and advanced detection techniques is more pressing than ever. This panel will explore cutting-edge analytical techniques and technologies that are reshaping critical mineral sustainability.

We will highlight advancements in quantification methods using instruments like Laser Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) and femtosecond Laser Ablation-Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (fs-LA-LIBS) and other measuring instruments. These techniques enable precise detection and quantification, especially for low-concentration elements like lithium, which are critical for the African continent's mineral wealth.

Key discussions will focus on emerging technologies that improve resource estimation, streamline extraction processes, and reduce environmental impacts. We will also emphasize the importance of traceability in ensuring responsible sourcing and mitigating supply chain risks, aligning with Africa's critical mineral policies and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in sustainable energy, economic growth, industrial innovation, and resource recycling.

The panel will address challenges such as data standardization, cross-border cooperation, and balancing innovation with regulatory compliance. By bringing together experts from academia, industry, and policy sectors, we aim to foster interdisciplinary dialogue on the future of critical mineral sustainability.



## Africa's Digital Infrastructure and neocolonial entanglements: exploring human and technical capabilities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Jess Auerbach Jahajeeah (South Africa) & Alena Thiel (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores digital infrastructure across Africa in the context of widespread digital colonialism and changing global geopolitics. It convenes a conversation at the intersection of digital colonialism, digital innovation and physical technology.

### ABSTRACT

This panel convenes a conversation about Africa's digital infrastructure and the extent to which this infrastructure has been captured and/or resists digital colonialism. Exploring fiber optic cables, data centers, points of presence, national educational internet networks and last-mile digital connectivity, the panel responds to three key questions: firstly, how has the shift towards the ownership and management of digital infrastructure by entities such as Meta, Alphabet and Huawei influenced the ability of African governments to shape and control their digital infrastructure? Secondly, how do the people responsible for building and maintaining the internet in Africa (data center and landing center operators, digital technicians etc.) understand shifting power dynamics of internet management on the continent and globally? Finally, what is the understanding of localized users of digital services as to the ownership, control and management of data streams generated by both their own and other's usage of digital tools? The panel solicits paper from a wide variety of backgrounds and disciplines – whether technical or social – that explore how the internet both functions and is understood. It is also interested in the extent to which the terms neo/digital colonialism find resonance as heuristic frameworks for understanding the contemporary moment of digital engagement, and/or whether alternative framings exist.

### African action on climate change, peace and security

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Olayinka Ajala (United Kingdom) & Thor Olav Iversen (Norway)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Climate change continues to impact and aggravate food, water, energy and security environments, having an adverse impact on livelihoods and influencing existing conflict and security-related challenges. The panel will set out to explore the effects of climate change on peace and security in Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

There is a growing body of evidence indicating how the effects of climate change when combined with existing instabilities can contribute to increasing the risk of violent conflict, particularly in Africa. Climate Change increases the risk of insecurity, which undermines Africa's efforts to sustain peace. Additionally, climate-change-related insecurity in one country can affect other countries, with spillover effects into regions, ultimately contributing to the imbalance in international peace and security.

In response to these challenges to peace and security in Africa, the African Union (AU) has set out to lead an initiative to understand the impact of climate risks on member states and outline ways to mitigate and adapt to these emerging challenges. The panel seeks to explore the nexus between climate change peace and security, emerging observations by the AU through diplomatic effort and policy, and analysis of the evolution of the AU and regional entities' efforts in this area.

This panel invites research articles exploring these nexus including aspects of diplomacy and policy on these issues on the continent. The panel is particularly interested in papers which identify how the effects of climate change could result in localized conflicts, ethnic divisions, competition for resources, terrorism and the formation of insurgent groups.

The panel is also interested in papers exploring climate change mitigations and adaptations such as early warning and early action systems, migration (local, regional and international) and natural resources management and how they could be used to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

### Afri-plastics? Entanglement, Exceptionalism and Innovation in Africa's Plasticsphere

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Brenda Chalfin (United States) & Kareen Buyana (Uganda)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Turning plastic from material to collective problem space, plastic in Africa has become an object of national and transnational – “Afropolitan” – investment and concern combining the knowledge and resources of citizen-scientists, creatives, academic experts, donors, non-profits, and private capital.

#### ABSTRACT

Popular depictions of Africa through the lens of plastic are marked by distortion, inconsistency and incomplete evidence. Reproducing tired tropes of disorder, African landscapes appear as toxic dumping grounds of plastic discards. Meanwhile, per capital plastic consumption according to the OECD averages 20% of consumers in the global north and 34 African nations – including the entire 16 nation SADC block – in keeping with UN directives have implemented plastics bans exceeding those of Europe. This panel moves away from such overarching claims, both good and bad, to probe the realities of living, working with, and reimagining plastics in Africa in the present. We ask how insights and innovations regarding plastic production, recycling, regulation, consumption in Africa offer reconsideration of plastic futures, from the identification of realistic targets, pathways, and technologies, to appropriate data points. We likewise aim to more systematically understand contemporary conditions of plastic knowledge production that situate plastic as shared object of national and transnational – “Afropolitan” – investment and concern combining the resources and tactics of creatives, donors, non-profits, and private capital to turn plastic from material to collective problem space. The panel seeks contributions highlighting Africa-based scientists, engineers, artists, citizen-scientists and other experts regarding the perils and potentials of plastic. The panel further invites contributions that probe the co-production of plastics technologies and imaginaries through “hackathons” “sustainability summits” and “crowd-sourced solutions” bridging corporations and academe, public and private interests, commodity and bio-value. Along with papers, multimedia presentations, and collaborative works crossing disciplines are especially encouraged.

## Cultural Heritage, Identity, and Adaptation Strategies in the Face of Environmental Change

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Emily McGiffin (United Kingdom) & Jonathan Jackson (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This multidisciplinary panel focuses on urgent threats to cultural heritage and identity catalysed by human-environmental processes such as climate change, urban expansion, and resource extraction; and explores how policies, adaptation strategies, and interventions strive to mitigate these effects.

### ABSTRACT

Industrial and technological changes have long raised profound concerns about planetary survival, less so their impact on cultural heritage, memory, and our human condition. Rapid environmental changes – whether through climate change, urban expansion, or resource extraction – are often deleterious to heritage landscapes. The loss of landscapes rich in tangible and intangible heritage affects cultural traditions, memory, livelihoods, and identities. This is true wherever human communities have close relationships with changing natural landscapes, but the transformation of African landscapes is a particularly grave concern. Weak regulatory and governance systems combined with a lack of transparency and public accountability leave communities vulnerable to the damaging practices of industries who profit from these conditions. Furthermore, unequitable relationships with trading partners means that governments struggle to hold unscrupulous practitioners accountable to regulatory structures. This multidisciplinary panel welcomes perspectives on and approaches to these dynamics. Presentations might address, but are not limited to, questions such as:

- How do the loss of heritage sites and landscapes and their associated cultural practices affect political and social spheres?
- How are Global North nations implicated in the loss of cultural heritage in Africa through malpractice and the impacts of destructive lifestyles?
- How does climate change affect cultural heritage?
- How can climate adaptation and other interventions recognize the specific and often paradoxical nature of conditions on the continent?
- How are these issues articulated in various expressive arts?
- What measures have been – or may be – attempted to preserve heritage landscapes and practices at risk?

## Destabilizing Western Visions on African Drylands: socio-ecologies, narratives, practices

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Valerio Bini (Italy) & Mariasole Pepa (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The session focuses on questioning the dominant paradigm of drylands as “wasteland” as well as new “green” narratives. It is about learning from African drylands communities and nonhuman entities for destabilizing dominant narratives and promote pluriversal visions.

### ABSTRACT

Interpretation of African drylands as “wasteland” and “backwards” (Kronenburg García et al., 2023) has played a central role in structuring European-African relations from colonial times to the present. These narratives, rooted in the colonial project, have been perpetuated by postcolonial political structures, shaping nowadays development and conservation interventions.

The Overpopulation-Overgrazing-Desertification framework, once used by colonial powers to assess African drylands, still influences many development interventions. Since the 1980s, however, critical voices (Leach, Mearns, 1996) challenged this approach, centering on ecologies of non-equilibrium (Botkin, 1992), and on the ability of traditional socio-environmental systems (Scoones, 1994).

The session aims to focus attention on these processes, which questioned the dominant paradigm of drylands as well as new “green” narratives promoted by actors like China, and aims to explore pluriversal visions (Khotari et al., 2019) which could inform other ways of thinking, and designing interventions on/with drylands. Sahelian spaces provide key insights into these entangled narratives and their territorial impacts (Pase et al., forthcoming). It is about learning from African drylands communities and nonhuman entities for destabilizing dominant narratives.

We welcomed contributions which engage with the following debates:

- Theoretical interpretation and narratives:
  - Critique of Western paradigms and colonial imaginaries of drylands
  - Narratives of old and new actors and their implications
    - Practices:
      - Coloniality of development interventions and their impact
      - Transformative initiatives in drylands (learning from communities and nonhuman entities)
      - Dryland as spaces of contestation and innovations
        - Alternative Approaches:
          - Poetics and politics of drylands: collaboration between researchers, artists, activists, photographers

## Dispossession, Migration and Violence in Africa. Ecologies of Land, conservation and natural resources

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Elieth Eyebiyi (Norway) & Elifuraha Laltaika (Tanzania)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How can dispossession be conceptualised in land, natural resources and minerals? To what extent does dispossession affect the sociability and citizenship? To what extent does dispossession structure the dynamics of migration and violence (armed or otherwise) among young people?

### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of land grabbing and the dispossession of natural and mining resources are becoming increasingly prevalent on the African continent. The loss of people's livelihoods, the phenomenon of forced displacement and voluntary migration, and the occurrence of armed violence are facilitated by the capture of the state by various interests. The impact of dispossession is manifold and pervasive. It operates through various means, including legal, political and economic instruments, and affects both animate and inanimate entities. It reshapes community membership and sociability, as well as the local, national and transnational imaginations of the state.

The objective of this panel is to examine the contemporary processes of resources dispossession in Africa through migration and violent resistance. The panel will focus on a number of key areas, including land tenure, the mining sector, fisheries resources (both river and marine), seeds and nature conservation in general to examine how dispossession occurs and how people reacts with migration or violence. The panel welcomes original contributions based on field surveys, archival work and historical methods, examining the following questions: How can dispossession be conceptualised in land, natural resources and minerals? To what extent does dispossession affect the sociability and citizenship? To what extent does dispossession structure the dynamics of migration and violence among young people?

## Ecospiritual practices: power dynamics, cultural change, and integrated landscape management in African contexts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Alessandra Manzini (France) & Houria Djoudi (Indonesia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How African cosmovisions and ecospiritual practices suggest a shift in imaginaries that shape macro policies for holistic landscapes management? Beyond inviting speakers to share perspectives, the panel aims to address power dynamics at play which still impact on how landscapes are governed today.

### ABSTRACT

African cosmologies offer ontological and epistemic insights on sustainability that are relevant for everyday practices. The epistemic and ontological validity of spirituality is given in African philosophy. The spiritual realm is also intrinsically linked to peoples' everyday life. Ecospiritual practices are part of reality, regardless of whether they pertain to religions. They influence behaviour patterns and norms, shaping human-nonhuman, more than human interactions, directly affecting how landscapes are managed or perceived in different contexts.

The panel invites scholars to bring examples of ecospiritual practices in African contexts to understand their diversity, including religious, artistic, social, and political aspects. By exploring these practices and paradigms the panel discusses their potentials to provide African perspectives on sustainability, suggesting the need for a shift in imaginaries that shape macro policies for integrated landscapes management. Beyond sharing perspectives, the panel invites scholars, researchers, activists and members of local groups to address the power dynamics at play, such as the continuity of top-down colonial and post-colonial management models, which continue to significantly influence contemporary landscape governance. The current state of these landscapes reflects a complex interplay of overlapping historical, social, political changes and conflicts. This raises critical questions regarding the implications for local and Indigenous peoples and their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). How have these local groups adapted their knowledge systems to answer rapidly changing conditions? The focus should move beyond merely idealizing past management models to critically examine the evolution of local knowledge and its adaptive capacities within the framework of present-day challenges.

## Ethiopia's Cultural Heritage in the Face of Climate Change and Socio-Cultural Transformations

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Alula Tesfay Asfha (Germany) & Rumi Okazaki (Japan)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the challenges of preserving Ethiopia's cultural heritage—sites, monuments, and urban landscapes—amid climate change, urbanization, and conflict. It highlights documentation technologies and stresses the need for co-creation and collaboration in safeguarding these treasures.

### ABSTRACT

Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage, encompassing archaeological sites, monuments, and historic urban landscapes, is increasingly threatened by climate change, urban growth, and socio-political shifts. This panel addresses the urgent need to document and preserve these cultural treasures, focusing on vernacular architecture (particularly rock-hewn churches) and archaeological sites.

Modern technologies like 3D laser scanning, drone mapping, and photogrammetry are transforming how we capture and conserve heritage sites, making them invaluable tools for addressing these challenges. The panel will explore the socio-political dynamics of conservation efforts, and the power dynamics between different stakeholders. It will highlight the opportunities and challenges of using documentation technologies in preserving heritage the roles of local communities, governments, and international organizations.

Case studies will highlight successful preservation strategies and adaptive techniques that mitigate environmental risks while ensuring sustainable development. The discussion will emphasize integrating heritage conservation into broader urban and rural planning frameworks, fostering a balance between preservation and modern needs.

By combining traditional knowledge with cutting-edge technologies, the panel aims to foster a collaborative dialogue on safeguarding Ethiopia's cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world. Contributions are invited from experts in heritage conservation, archaeology, anthropology, urban planning, and environmental studies to explore innovative solutions for protecting these invaluable sites.



### Forms, flows and flux: Sedimentary politics across sub-Saharan Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Kate Dawson (United Kingdom) & Jan Bachmann (Sweden)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites papers that grapple with the politics of sedimentary materials and processes from across diverse African contexts, pushing forward debates on geosocial formations (Clark and Yusoff 2017), the Anthropocene (Hecht 2018; Peša 2023) political geology (Bobette and Donovan 2019).

#### ABSTRACT

Coastal and riverbank erosion, loss of wetlands, desertification, agricultural transformations, large-scale mining, damming, dredging. Indicative of the Anthropocene more broadly, these are but a few of the observable dynamics of the way sediment moves, or is made to move across diverse landscapes in sub-Saharan Africa - and the world more broadly. The purpose of this panel is to invite recent work which grapples with sedimentary shifts, in order to think *across* sedimentary forms and the socio-natural processes they are connected to. By thinking across sediments and their worlds, from diverse African contexts, we hope this panel will push forward debates on geosocial formations (Clark and Yusoff 2017), the Anthropocene (Hecht 2018; Peša 2023) political geology (Bobette and Donovan 2019) and political ecology more broadly. Papers might think with one category of sediment – like dust, clay, silt, mud, sand, pebbles, rocks – or think about the dynamic relationships between sedimentary materials or processes. The panel invites papers that attend to the ways sedimentary materials and processes are implicated in social life, cultural imaginaries and political dynamics across African contexts. We invite papers that grapple with questions such as: In what ways do people engage with sedimentary formations? In what ways do people enact and react to sedimentary fluctuations? How are these shaped by and constitutive of social life and politics? Submissions may speak (but not limited) to:

- Africa and the Anthropocene
- Ecological change & landscape transformations
- Resource geographies & political economies
- Infrastructural development & urbanization
- Pollution and toxicity

### Gender, intersectionality, climate change and the environment in conflict-affected areas

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Maria Martin de Almagro (Belgium) & Johanna Malma (Sweden)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores in-depth empirical evidence exploring the intersections of gender, (neo)-colonialism, extraction, displacement, conflicts, gender-based violence, land-grabbing, accumulation and climate change play out in conflict-affected areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

Gender and intersectionality are key factors to consider in understanding and addressing implications of and responses to climate change and environmental catastrophe. Decolonial and feminist scholarship has been instrumental in advocating for a shift away from race- and gender-blind analyses in 'mainstream' political economy. Decolonial Ecofeminists in Latin America and Asia, in particular, critique Eurocentric and masculinist epistemologies and temporalities, both theoretically and methodologically, providing deeper insights into the mechanisms that perpetuate environmental injustice and climate inaction. This includes exposing how racial and gender injustices are embedded within the logic of extractivism that upholds Global North wealth and are normalized in dominant global political institutions. Yet, in-depth empirical evidence exploring the intersections of (neo)-colonialism, extraction, displacement, conflicts, gender-based violence, land-grabbing, accumulation and climate change play out in conflict-affected areas in sub-Saharan Africa is still scarce to pertinently understand and address the challenges at play. The proposed panel invites empirically grounded (single case studies or comparative evidence) contributions from across the African continent to shed light on the subject matter. The panel welcomes contributions on 1) gender and intersectionality in areas affected by conflict and sudden-onset disasters; 2) gender as a tool for understanding implications of and responses to slow-onset events; 3) gendered strategies for engaging the extractive industries; 4) gender and climate change as a lens to understanding armed groups and the reintegration of former combatants. The proposed panel particularly welcomes contributions from African scholars.

## Hydropolitics in Rural Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Detlef Müller-Mahn (Germany) & Theobald Frank Theodory (Tanzania)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the changing role of rural areas and populations in the context of hydropolitics and water-related developments in Africa. It critically revisits rural-urban relations through a water lens.

### ABSTRACT

The panel takes its departure from the assumption that state-led water governance in Africa has so far mostly privileged urban interests – to the disadvantage of rural populations. Examples include the numerous water supply projects for the rapidly growing cities and towns all over the continent, the building of hydro-power dams for energy production and industrialization, and the preference for export-oriented agro-industries against smallholder farming. As a consequence, rural peripheries have been degraded to source areas or “water towers” for neighboring cities and towns, rural water sources are diverted to urban centers, and rural populations are increasingly affected by water scarcity. While many urban areas in Africa face extreme water shortage, the competition for water resources is also intensifying in rural environments. Currently, many parts of the continent face a severe water crisis leading to conflicts over scarce resources. Access to water is becoming an issue of power and money, which raises a number of questions:

- Which actors and institutions control the redistribution of water at different scales?
- How does the growing urban demand for water impact rural livelihoods?
- Who benefits from current hydropolitics, and who is disadvantaged?
- How does changing hydropolitics influence rural-urban relations?

The panel invites case study based and conceptual contributions to critically debate the urban bias of African hydropolitics, and to explore the consequences and alternatives for rural populations.

## Identity, Belonging, Exclusion, and Transnational Capitalism: Eco-humanities and the Niger Delta Oil Entanglement

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Joyce Onoromhenre Agofure (Nigeria) & Abba Abba (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to explore how eco-humanities critically examines the intricate web of global entanglements and transnational capitalism that shape local identities, belonging, and exclusion within the context of oil politics in the Niger Delta.

### ABSTRACT

The global entanglements surrounding oil realities in Nigeria are deeply influenced by unequal transnational regimes of location, mobility, and belonging, shaped by the dynamics of late capitalism and radical environmental changes. These factors collectively impact the political and cultural economy of the region, leading to frontiers of contestation over identity, belonging, and exclusion. In this context, the Niger Delta serves as a critical site for understanding how global capitalism interacts with local realities. The region's oil wealth has attracted multinational corporations and foreign governments, which often prioritize profit over local community welfare. This has resulted in environmental degradation and social dislocation, exacerbating existing inequalities and marginalizing local populations. Consequently, the struggle for resources and recognition intensifies as displaced communities seek to assert their rights, identity, belonging, and exclusion in new contexts. This panel encourages contributions that address the following:

How has eco-humanities engaged in oil-related economic activities that impact the construction and negotiation of multiple parallel identities in the Niger Delta?

In what way has eco-humanities interrogated the attempt by transnational corporations to reshape local communities and their sense of belonging and exclusion?

What are the ecocritical implications of oil wealth on the Niger Delta's cultural/social fabric?

How has eco-humanities re-imagined alternative futures about transnational pressures and radical environmental changes that affect pathways to sustainable development in the Niger Delta?

By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and innovative methodologies, this panel seeks to illuminate the socio-environmental realities that shape identity and belonging in 21st-century African society.

## Imprisonment and Control: Carcerality in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Hanno Brankamp (United Kingdom) & Yusuf Patel (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel invites papers examining carceral practices in Africa, both historic and cotemporary. The panel will explore how incarceration has been central to methods of control and governance in Africa and constitutes a key legacy of colonialism.

### ABSTRACT

This panel joins a growing body of recent scholarship interested in the histories, geographies, politics, and lived experiences of carceral control in Africa. The continent has long been, and continues to be, a testing ground for technologies aimed at restricting human mobilities and curtailing their freedoms. Cognizant of the challenges that exist in dealing with such violent histories and presents, this panel seeks to explore the ongoing entanglements of incarceration with diverse life-worlds on the continent that encompass—but are not limited to—memories, race and ethnicity, coloniality, social justice, architectures, material infrastructures, institutions, racial capitalism, human rights, (govern)mentalities, and embodied practices. In short, how do overlapping carceral histories, paradigms, and landscapes shape African notions of belonging, identity, societal order? How have carceral forms of rule co-developed with other coercive institutions? And what kinds of resistances, contestations, refusals have emerged in their wake? By exploring case studies from various parts of Africa, this panel aims to contribute to a better understanding of how incarceration functions not just as a tool of punishment but as a significant element of political, geographical, and political regulation. These talks would be best suited as a panel discussion, with lightening presentations followed by a discussion.

## Indigenous identity, agency and custodianship of nature in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Fergus Simpson (Belgium) & Richard Sufo Kankeu (Cameroon)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel scrutinises the role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) as custodians of African nature. It explores Indigenous identity, agency and belonging in relation to their ancestral environments with case studies from diverse ecological, cultural and geographical settings.

### ABSTRACT

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC's) are central to policy debates about nature conservation in Africa, and more broadly. However, participants in these debates often represent the role and identity of IPLCs in overly simplistic terms. On the one hand, conservationists sometimes depict IPLC's as poachers and criminals from whom nature must be protected. On the other hand, Indigenous rights NGOs and activists frequently portray IPLCs as unimpeachable guardians of nature. Upon first inspection, these binary representations appear contradictory: one stresses Indigenous agency as a defence against the despoliation of biodiversity and ecosystems, while the other characterises it as a force driving environmental destruction. However, both representations can also be seen to reinforce a single, dominant perspective: namely, that the fate of nature hinges upon Indigenous peoples. This panel will challenge this, by decentring the role of IPLCs – in conservation and/or extraction – and viewing it as context-dependent.

On this basis, we are interested in presentations that explore how wider social structures – e.g. colonisation, armed conflict, advancing commodity frontiers (e.g. for mining, timber, charcoal, agriculture), demographic changes, conservation policies, environmental changes, and so on – affect the way Indigenous peoples relate to their ancestral environments. We invite panellists to submit single or multiple case studies from a variety of geographical, ecological and cultural settings. We welcome presentations based on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. By comparing and contrasting diverse cases from across Africa, the panel will further understanding of the complex, non-uniform realities of indigenous custodianship of nature.

### Reflecting Climate Change in Tertiary Education around Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Lenka Zouhar Ludvíková (Czech Republic) & Jacqueline Makatiani (Kenya)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel should attract papers focusing on how tertiary education institutions prepare future generations for climate change. Naturally, there is a range of relevant issues within climate change, environmental, economic and social, and there are various disciplines that tackle them.

#### ABSTRACT

Climate change is a buzzword that appears in a number of enviropolitical documents, such as agreements, declarations and conventions. They emphasize the cooperation between the Geopolitical South and North and to what extent and how the adaptation and mitigation measures are effected on international, national and local levels. An important aspect in any field dealing with climate change is the level of uncertainty in predicting the impacts. The panel aims to interconnect the range of aspects the climate change studies may have and how to show the students their position in the world facing hard-to-predict consequences.

This panel should open a discussion on how different educators may address dimensions of climate change studies. A bipolar approach is essential in working with the students; on one hand the interdisciplinarity of their education and at the same time their strong background in a particular core discipline, be it economics, chemistry, forestry or anything else. This will encourage a deeper understanding rather than a broad overview of the climate change issues. The panel should also serve as a platform for sharing the best practices and cooperating between different institutions. Presenting study programmes and opportunities for expanding and developing education will hopefully inspire the others in educating future experts.

## Sustainable Identities in/of Extractivism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Diana Ayeh (Germany) & John Manyimadin Kusimi (Ghana)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores to what extent calls for sustainability change the various modes and dimensions of African extractivism(s). It does so by critically examining changing and sustaining relations under 'green extractivism' (e.g., in terms of modes of production, power relations, or subjectivities).

### ABSTRACT

Extractivism finds its forms and expressions not only in the appropriation of resources on the African continent, it is also known for shaping and being shaped by peoples' various identities, visions, and political orientations. In an age of climate change and new global quests for sustainability, the self-perception of industries and their labor force, of states and the various segments of society seem to be in constant flux. A number of African governments have recently started to engage in renegotiating the terms and conditions for foreign capital investments, e.g., by introducing 'green minerals policies'. At the same time, though, scholars from political ecology note the reemergence of (old forms of) extractivism under the guise of green-washing notions such as 'sustainable development', stating that people living in the vicinity of extraction projects remain, or become even more, confronted to the unsustainability of capitalist modernity.

This panel aims to study in more detail the particular and shifting forms of seeing and being in the world attached to (apparently) changing modes of and requirements for 'green' resource extraction. The study of extractivism is thereby focused on past, present and future extractive operations on the African continent (e.g., mines and plantations), as well as their global, national or local supply-webs. By inviting theoretical and empirical contributions from various disciplinary fields, it seeks to gain more fine-grained insights into how 'green extractivism' evolved and looks like, and to contribute to a non-normative understanding of sustainability amid concerns for the Anthropocene and environmental racism.



## Untangling the effects of transnational conservation policies on Africa's rural areas: Exclusionary or effective climate instruments?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Environment and Geography

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Marie Gagné (Canada) & Jacobo Grajales (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel interrogates the pertinence, for Africa, of conservation policies and climate instruments designed in distant international forums and foreign markets, assessing their effects on agricultural development, labour relations, land access, agrarian struggles, and social identities.

### ABSTRACT

In recent years, a heterogeneous set of non-state actors has pushed a new global conservation agenda to fight climate change and manage forests. An iteration of this agenda consists of making the production of agricultural commodities “deforestation-free,” like the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Another initiative is the “30X30” pledge to protect 30% of the planet’s terrestrial, inland water, and coastal areas by 2030, as laid out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Yet another example is the REDD+ constellation of projects and other types of payments for ecosystem services.

While vigorous action is incontestably needed to curb the harmful impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, these interventions are often criticized on the grounds of environmental justice considerations. A growing amount of literature highlights the problematic premise of these projects, which transfers the cost of the North’s energy transition towards populations in the Global South. A further critique points to the fact that environmental policy reproduces the exclusionary patterns and dynamics of extraversion that characterize the place of most African societies in the world economy.

In line with the conference theme, this panel interrogates the pertinence, for the African continent, of conservation policies and climate instruments designed in distant international forums and foreign markets. It assesses the effects of these transnational policies on Africa’s rural areas, in particular on agricultural development, labour relations, land access, agrarian struggles, and social identities. We invite proposals spanning a whole range of outcomes to showcase both promising and disappointing interventions.

## Health

### Climate Crisis and Healthcare challenges in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Health

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko (Nigeria) & Folaranmi Olorunnibe (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The World Health Organisation has noted that the global climate crisis affects human health and well-being. This makes it important to discuss the impact of climate crisis on healthcare policies, knowledge production, availability and use of organic herbs in complementary healthcare in Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

World Health Organisation has noted that Climate change is impacting human lives and health in a variety of ways. This is affirmed by the World bank as the global climate crisis affects human health and well-being, especially millions of vulnerable women, children, and people with pre-existing health conditions. In line with these observations, researches have also shown increase in the number of people affected by heat-related illnesses and deaths; impacts of extreme weather such as floods, droughts, wildfires, resulting in windstorms and strains on health systems. These impacts threaten the essential ingredients of good health such as clean air, safe drinking water, and food supply which could lead to million additional deaths by 2050. Beyond the observed impact of climate crisis, this panel focuses on the impact of climate crisis on drug manufacturing and supply in Africa. This is of interest as healthcare in Africa and around the world is significantly being defined by complementary medicine. And drugs are discovered and manufactured from plants and the climate crisis significantly affects plants. Papers are expected to speak to different aspects of climate crisis as they affect healthcare policies, knowledge production in complementary medicine, availability of herbs, possibility of organic drug production, cost of complementary medicine and quality of plants used for healthcare in Africa.

## The Nexus between Insecurity and Health in Protracted Conflict Zones in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Health

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Thomas Druetz (Canada) & Matthew I. Mitchell (Canada)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The salience of conflict across Africa has widespread implications for health outcomes. While the repercussions in humanitarian settings are widely documented, there is much less research on how local populations access healthcare in conflict zones. This panel will address this research gap.

### ABSTRACT

The salience of conflict across Africa has widespread implications for public health outcomes. While the repercussions in humanitarian settings or on displaced/refugee populations are more widely documented, there is much less evidence on how local populations continue to have access to health services in ongoing conflict zones characterized by high levels of insecurity. This panel proposes to take stock of this question and considers the impact of violent conflict on health of those populations who remain in conflict-affected areas. It invites papers from disciplinary backgrounds such as anthropology, development studies, health studies, demography, history and political science to explore the complexities surrounding health outcomes in conflict-affected zones in Africa. This multidisciplinary approach will provide a unique forum for panelists to consider how diverse actors (e.g. bureaucrats, customary authorities, health personnel, NGOs, security forces) act together for the provision of healthcare services in conflict-wracked regions, and what mechanisms are effective to preserve their access for local populations. Prospective presenters may wish to develop papers around the following research questions: What are the gendered dimensions around the conflict-health nexus across diverse African settings? How do violent conflicts (re)shape authority and power relations in terms of local healthcare provision? Using an intersectional lens, in what ways might analytical categories such as class, ethnicity, race, gender, religion influence access to health services in zones of protracted conflict? These sample questions may provide fruitful avenues for understanding the complex ways that the politics of belonging influence health outcomes in diverse conflict-affected regions across Africa.

## History

### Africa and the Atom: African Nuclear Histories in the Atomic Age

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Chloë Mayoux (United States) & Robin E. Möser (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to address blind spots in the historiography of Africa in the atomic age, propose theoretical frameworks and methodological innovations which can give the field new momentum, and thus help bring to the fore a richer, more diverse and inclusive narrative of the atomic age.

#### ABSTRACT

Scholarship on Africa in the atomic age has come a long way in the last two decades. Not only has recent work shown the diversity of nuclear stories in Africa and their links with European and global history, but it has also suggested that the African continent made a distinct contribution to the atomic age, from its provision of uranium to its participation in non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives. Still, the geographical coverage is patchy: countries like Namibia, Congo and Egypt merit special consideration. So far, we have also paid more attention to African attitudes towards nuclear weapons and tests, than to uses of atomic science for energy, agriculture, industry, and medicine. Equally under-researched has been the Organisation of African Unity's traditional stance against nuclear weapons, less state-centric accounts of African resistance to Saharan nuclear testing, and the roles played by African actors within the IAEA during the Cold War. Notable exceptions aside, the diplomatic turn of the last years, whilst writing Africa back into the Global Nuclear Order, has obscured questions relating to the environment and human belonging. Overall, the field continues to lack coherence, creativity, and direction. This panel aims to address historiographical blind spots, propose theoretical frameworks and methodological innovations which can give the field new momentum, and thus help bring to the fore a richer, more diverse and inclusive narrative of the atomic age. We especially welcome submissions from scholars based in Africa and look forward to receiving proposals covering new geographical, thematic and theoretical ground.

### African societies and the staging of technical objects: the politics of 'modernity' (late 19th century to present day)

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Benoit BEUCHER (France) & Didier Nativel (France)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel questions the way in which technical objects are captured by African societies in a (post)colonial context. It aims to emphasize the collective and individual forms of self-staging and to identify the extent to which these performances shape social and political hierarchies.

#### ABSTRACT

'Modernity' is no easier to capture than its counterpart, namely 'tradition'. Its political and emotional charge is particularly strong. It is fully part of the colonial rhetoric which, at least from the 19th century, legitimized the formation and preservation of the Empire. Technical objects, starting with firearms, but also automobiles, fireworks, the telegraph, etc., are fully used by Europeans who, in the era of media and spectacle, make them an essential part of the establishment of their power, but also their aura, which is well reflected in the concept of 'colonial sublime' proposed by Brian Larkin.

The play of contrasts between African societies presumed to be far removed from anything related to technology and science, and 'technical' Western societies is a topos of colonial literature. Supported by iconographic programs, the latter often highlights the stupefaction of African faced with objects presented as complex.

This panel aims to know how technical objects are reinvented by contemporary African societies. How do they participate in self-presentation, particularly on an everyday level? What forms of communication are established between the politics of modernity supported from above and from below? How do these technical objects take place in situations of inversion and trick likely to restore pride and self-reappropriation in the context of decolonization, but also of contestation of postcolonial powers? Finally this panel will aim to question the new styles of conduct and types of men and women that these relationships with technical objects produce.

### Afropean knowledge production: rethinking the collection of linguistic and oral sources in the 19th and 20th centuries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Lefebvre Camille (France) & Awagana Ari (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

At a time when oral traditions and practices are slowly vanishing, we need to collectively rethink how to find new sources to write African history before 1900. We want to discuss how to work with fragile or sensitive sources produced by the encounter between Europeans and Africans.

#### ABSTRACT

For more than 40 years now, social sciences have been in an age of suspicion towards scientific documentation: how to produce science; based on documents, languages or discourses that convey biased meanings? In African studies, the suspicion has been focused towards any documentation produced in an interaction between Africans and Europeans. All the knowledge and research produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been considered as entrenched in colonial control, by-products of epistemic violence and instrumental to the logics of European expansion. It is clear, that postcolonial and decolonial theories have led to invaluable reflections on the hegemonic nature of colonial knowledge. However, it has also led to an indiscriminate rejection of all European research on later colonised societies, including studies conducted well in advance of the era of colonial domination and not necessarily biased by imperialist views. Analysing the categories and tropes of European views on Africa must not lead to turn down all documents collected or produced in relation to the European interest, and neither should it minimise the interactionist nature of any social production. Some of the documents accessible to us today are so much the product of interactions between African actors, scholars, authors and European collectors, writers, scholars, that they could be considered as Afropean rather than only European. We would like to invite presenters to discuss these issues, especially with respect to languages, oral and written literatures.

## Afropolitanism in the African Indian Ocean [CRG Africa in the Indian Ocean panel]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Preben Kaarsholm (Denmark) & Iain Walker (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Indian Ocean Afropolitanism has attempted to reconcile cosmopolitanism with African belonging within Oceanic settings of mobility and has interacted with debates on pan-Africanism and nationalism. The panel will discuss political and cultural expressions of this in historical perspective.

### ABSTRACT

The concept of Afropolitanism - as proposed by Taiye Selasi, Achille Mbembe and Sarah Balakrishnan - may help to rethink histories of African migration, diaspora and nation-building. The notion highlights forms of intertwined and multiplied belonging as not only features of elite cosmopolitanism, but as everyday realities in the lives of migrants, refugees and people neglected by the state.

In African Indian Ocean contexts Afropolitan realities and aspirations – and resistances to them – have taken different forms. A variety of efforts have been made to reconcile non-racialism and cosmopolitanism with notions of African belonging within Oceanic settings of mobility and migration, and these have interacted in different ways with debates on pan-Africanism and secular nationalism. Can Indians be Africans? Can Mauritians, Europeans and Malagasies? If so, what are the implications?

The panel will bring together papers discussing political and cultural expressions of such efforts and controversies and their historical background. This will include social movements, literary, musical and artistic outputs, media initiatives and agendas, and will focus on both African Indian Ocean island, coastal and hinterland settings, and on urban, rural and maritime networks of interaction and migration. The panel will welcome papers addressing issues of multiple belonging and overlapping diasporas, and the impact of legacies of slavery and indenture on the conceptualization of relations between racial groupings.

## Belonging in toxic places

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Iva Pesa (the Netherlands) & Joseph Mujere (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How do people across Africa develop belonging in toxic places? Why do some waste pickers, mineworkers, and farmers have affective attachments to localities that poison them? Inspired by the environmental humanities, we zoom in on the relationships between toxicity, environment, people, and place.

### ABSTRACT

Although we live in a permanently polluted world, some places are far more toxic than others. This panel asks how people develop belonging in dangerously toxic places, such as disused uranium mines, gigantic waste sites, or in the vicinity of fertiliser plants. How do people in Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia learn to live with pollution, even developing positive attachments to industrial sites? We examine the environmental dynamics of what James Ferguson calls *Expectations of Modernity* (1999). Can adopting perspectives from environmental history allow us to better narrate trajectories of industrial ruin and its attendant toxicity? Why do people in Agbogboshie choose to remain in a site that exposes them to lethal levels of pollution? What does studying sites of severe toxicity tell us about specific African manifestations of environmentalism?

Recent work in the environmental humanities has complicated manifestations of environmentalism beyond resistance to toxicity, urging us to examine *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* (Tsing et al., 2017). Works by Jacob Doherty (2021) and Gabrielle Hecht (2023) stress the importance of politics and power relations in shaping pollution, waste, disposability, and belonging. By seeking detailed empirical contributions grounded in localities across the African continent, this panel zooms in on these relationships between toxicity, people, environment, and place. Given the planetary climate crisis, a place-based understanding of how attachment to toxic localities develops and transforms over time in Africa is urgently needed.



## Contours of Connections, Systematic dilemmas and cultural divisions (mutations) among African Diasporic Groups

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Chukwuemeka Oko-Otu (United Kingdom) & Gilbert Ndi Shang (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The African diaspora has a complex and multifaceted history that spans several centuries and continents. From the trans-Saharan through the trans-Atlantic slave trade to colonialism and its aftermath, African diasporic groups continue to influence and are influenced by the cultures of their hosts.

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the intricate connections, systemic challenges, and evolving cultural identities within African diasporic communities. The African diaspora has a multifaceted history that spans several centuries and continents. From the trans-Saharan through the trans-Atlantic slave trade to colonialism and its aftermath, the African diaspora continues to grow through voluntary migration for education, employment, and other opportunities. By examining historical and contemporary contexts, we aim to uncover the multifaceted relationships that bind diasporic groups together while also highlighting the systemic dilemmas they face. The panel will delve into the cultural mutations that arise from migration, globalisation, and intergenerational shifts, offering insights into how these dynamics shape identity, community cohesion, and socio-political engagement. How are Africans in the diaspora blending elements of their cultures with those of their hosts, creating unique identities from the perspectives of language, fashion, music, and culinary traditions? How has the global exchange of ideas and cultural practices led to the adoption of new cultural elements and the transformation of existing ones? Does the shared experiences and identities of Africans in the diaspora strengthen community bonds, or do the differences in cultural adaptation and identity cause friction within diasporic communities? How has technology accelerated cultural mutations? How are African diasporic groups leveraging technology to stay connected and share their evolving cultural expressions? Through an interdisciplinary perspective, the panel seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the resilience and adaptability of African diasporic groups in the face of ongoing cultural and systemic transformations.

### Decolonising Minds and Relations – Diverse Approaches of Cooperation with African Partners

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Wolbert Smidt (Germany) & Kamil Kuraszkiwicz (Poland)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel is devoted to presenting initiatives that involve partnership relations with researched African communities and discussing in which way such a partnership is possible, considering local hierarchies and circumstances.

#### ABSTRACT

For a long time, there were clearly defined “us” and “them” in African studies, resulting, among others, from the colonial approach (and from anthropological-philosophical theories postulating a civilisational superiority of the “Occident”). The relations between these could have been confrontational, patronising, supportive or otherwise, but the division was distinct. This slowly evolved into “us” and “you” which gave subjectivity to the researched peoples. The final step in decolonising the studies on Africa would be forming a single “us” encompassing all parties involved. This would not only give African cultures subjectivity, but also create a partnership, enabling efficient production of knowledge, implementation of complementary approaches and shared sense of responsibility. However may not easy, as the colonialism impacted both sides forcing them accept the strict, one-directional hierarchies (either benefitting from them or being exploited), and challenging them may involve unsettling existing (and functioning) social structures.

Visions of the past are an inherent part of the contemporary environment, shaping the landscape, societies, and relations. Doubtless, past and contemporary cultures form a continuity, and any link to the past, including intangible remains like local knowledge – memories, customs, identities or linguistic legacy etc, should be understood as part of cultural heritage. But this cannot be understood, researched or applied when observed only from the outside. We invite papers which discuss this theme from a theoretical angle and/or within the history of research, all papers on specific projects, which make different models of cooperation visible and/or may contribute to a shift of perspectives.

## Digital Humanities (DH) and AI in African Studies: Opportunities, Challenges, and Decolonial Perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** **Frédéric Madore** (Germany) & **Vincent Hiribarren** (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the transformative potential and challenges of DH and AI in African studies. It examines their impact on knowledge production and dissemination, addressing Anglocentricity and the "digital divide", while promoting dialogue on decolonising digital practices in the field.

### ABSTRACT

As the "digital turn" in African studies gains momentum, this panel explores the transformative potential and critical challenges of digital humanities (DH) and artificial intelligence (AI) in the field. We examine their impact on the production, dissemination, and interpretation of knowledge about Africa, addressing the persistent Anglocentricity and "digital divide".

We invite papers that present innovative applications of computational methods in African studies and/or critical reflections on decolonising DH practices. Topics may include:

#### 1. Methodological innovations:

- Digital approaches to exploring African, Afropolitan, and Afropean belongings through textual and visual analysis
- AI-driven analysis of digitised African content (e.g., natural language processing, named entity recognition)
- Teaching African history with digital tools

#### 2. Critical perspectives:

- Decolonising DH methodologies and epistemologies
- Addressing "digital imperialism" (Breckenridge 2014) and the "digital saviour complex" (Shringarpure 2020) in relation to positionality and knowledge construction
- Ethical considerations in applying DH methods to culturally sensitive contexts

#### 3. Knowledge production and dissemination:

- Digital platforms for alternative knowledge production and public scholarship centred on African perspectives
- Strategies for overcoming selective digitisation and colonial hierarchies in digital archiving
- Transnational and cross-continental collaborative digital projects that challenge established Global North paradigms

The panel aims to showcase cutting-edge transdisciplinary research that uses digital methods to explore the complexities of African realities, identities, and knowledge systems. By fostering dialogue on the potential and pitfalls of digital approaches, we aim to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and critically aware digital landscape in African studies.

## Emerging and Re-Emerging Afropolitanism in African Traditional Religion and Medicine: Narrating the Struggles in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Obafemi Jegede (Nigeria) & Tolulope Esther Fadeyi (Switzerland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Afropolitanism emerged in response to colonial and missionary influences and promoted cultural continuity through the integration of African traditional religion, medicine, and indigenous knowledge. We seek to join an interdisciplinary approach to explore these struggles and their future impact.

### ABSTRACT

Centuries of colonial and missionary activities have deeply impacted Africa's political, economic, and cultural landscape, often causing a disconnection from ancestral roots and leading to cultural amnesia. In response, about six decades ago, the movement of Afropolitanism emerged, focused on reviving and sustaining cultural continuity. This movement is characterised by interconnected social and existential struggles where medicine and religion are inseparably linked.

Afropolitanism emphasises the global and cultural significance of African traditional religion and medicine. Within this context, Traditional Medical Practitioners, including Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), highlight their essential role in supporting the well-being of African communities. There is a renewed effort to preserve cultural heritage, as traditional religious leaders strive to reinforce African spiritual practices amid external influences.

Indigenous medical practitioners are organizing to raise public awareness, challenge prevailing ideologies, and advocate for integrating African perspectives into broader development initiatives. Despite the substantial influence and resources of dominant external forces, there is an ongoing effort to sustain and integrate Afropolitanism into Africa's future, and to promote these practices within the African diaspora.

This panel invites interdisciplinary scholarly papers that explore the methodologies and challenges associated with Afropolitanism, particularly the role of narrativism in the revival of African traditional religion, indigenous knowledge systems, and medicine. Papers should investigate how these movements aim to shape Africa's future amidst ongoing resistance and cultural tensions, drawing on perspectives from various disciplines.

## EthioGlobal: Exploring Ethiopian Diasporas in the 20th Century

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Stéphane Ancel (France) & Matteo D'Avanzo (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The Ethiopian diaspora, spread globally, is diverse and dynamic. This panel examines the experiences of these communities, focusing on their relationships with host nations and the significance of Afropolitan identity by analysing the intersections of religion, economics, and politics.

### ABSTRACT

This panel seeks to offer an extensive historical analysis of Ethiopian diasporas throughout the 20th century, revealing their intricate and multifaceted nature encompassing religious, political, and economic dimensions. It seeks to compile contributions that explore these diverse experiences, providing fresh and insightful perspectives on the character of these diasporas. The focus will be on intra-diasporic dynamics, interactions with other African diasporas in host countries, the formation of connections with the country of origin, and the significance of Afropolitan identity among diaspora members.

Particularly, the panel invites papers that delve into the religious dimensions of the diaspora, examining how religious identity influences the experiences and narratives of Ethiopian diaspora members within the distinct contexts of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Attention will also be devoted to the political aspects, especially how the political struggles of the 1970s influenced the Ethiopian diasporas globally, including the extent of diaspora engagement in anti-regime activities within host countries. Finally, given the significant legacy of the workers' diaspora in Ethiopian diaspora history, the panel aims to explore the nature of their activities, struggles, campaigns, and processes of identity formation that have shaped Ethiopian migrant diasporas worldwide.

### Healers and politics in African history – historical and anthropological perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Markku Hokkanen (Finland) & Benson Mulemi (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This roundtable proposes to discuss relations between healers and politics in African history and anthropology. It explores healers' agency, the dynamics of healing and its political ramifications against the background of major transformations affecting African populations' health and well-being.

#### ABSTRACT

The association between healing, divination and political agency, in its broadest sense, forms an essential aspect of African history. African healers and diviners figure prominently as in studies focusing upon health and well-being from precolonial to the present, charged with mediating relations between physical and spiritual worlds. The history of healers operating at the nexus between society and politics however remains under-researched. Surrounded by institutionalised secrecy and stigmatised during the colonial era, healers' histories have been difficult to uncover. Nevertheless, they have emerged as a relevant topic in ongoing debates on the construction of African identity and belonging, as well as decoloniality and indigenous knowledge.

Post-colonial interest in public health, the Africanisation of health systems, the regulation of biomedicine and ethnomedicine and the HIV/AIDS epidemic have served to put African healers and traditional healing institutions on regional and national agendas. Not without tensions surfacing as traditional healers, backed by their respective associations, negotiate with the state and its agencies on their professional practice, or in their defence of the preservation of indigenous medical knowledge and resources, threatened by climate change, deforestation, bioprospecting and biopiracy.

Based upon a forthcoming edited volume, this roundtable proposes to discuss relations between healers and politics in modern African history from an interdisciplinary perspective. It intends to explore healers' agency, the dynamics of healing and its political ramifications against the background of major transformations affecting African populations' health and well-being.

## Historicizing Linguistic Belonging in Urban Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Margot Luyckfasseel (Belgium) & Thembanani Dube (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel unpacks the nexus between language and belonging throughout African urban history. It historicizes how linguistic identities have been mobilized for political, social and economic purposes in urban and multilingual African contexts, with special attention for migrant communities.

### ABSTRACT

This panel invites contributions that reflect on the nexus between language and forms of belonging throughout African urban history. Linguistic registers play an important role in how people express their belonging to specific communities, how they perform their identities, and how they experience their place in the world. Given Africa's multilingual character, the interplay between these linguistic roles gains even more complex dimensions. This is especially the case in urban contexts, where different linguistic backgrounds encounter one another in an even more condensed setting through different migratory fluxes. Additionally, the multifaceted relation between language and forms of ethnic belonging have been used throughout African history to mobilize collective identities for political, social and economic purposes (see for example Luyckfasseel & Meeuwis 2018, Dube 2020). While the relation between language and belonging has been extensively researched within the fields of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, historians have paid less attention to it (but see Robinson 2022, Castillo 2023 for recent examples). Sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, on the other hand, could benefit from an engagement with debates about historical processes of urban identity making in Africa. This panel hence welcomes scholars from all disciplines who wish to engage in a discussion about urban histories of linguistic belonging.

## Identity and Belonging in African Colonial Counterinsurgencies

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Lauren Cochrane (United Kingdom) & Thomas Wright (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Colonial insurgencies and counterinsurgency (COIN) definitively shaped African decolonisation. Exploring how positionality affected participation and perspectives on COIN, this panel offers new insights into the interplay between violence and identity, highlighting post-colonial legacies in Africa.

### ABSTRACT

Colonial counter-insurgency operations often reveal deep-seated issues of identity and belonging. This panel looks to examine African-European relations during violent counter-insurgency campaigns, uniting scholars studying these operations and their legacies. From Algeria to South Africa and Angola to Kenya, African decolonisation involved violent struggles, repression, and social upheaval, shaping both African and European (post-)colonial identities. Factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, age, and socio-economic status influenced participation and perspectives on counterinsurgency. The panel aims to offer new scholarly insights into the interplay between violence, state-making, identity, and belonging. By exploring the complexities and ambiguities of insurgency and counterinsurgency, we can better understand the decolonisation period. For many African states, decolonisation involved intense violence and transformation but also opportunities to reimagine identities. Enduring in its significance today due to the resurgence of global identity politics and the ongoing connection between insurgency, violence, and nation-building in Africa, this panel will explore topics including:

- The role of ethnic, religious, and cultural identities in shaping insurgent and counterinsurgent strategies and outcomes
- Narratives of belonging and exclusion propagated by state and non-state actors.
- The impact of identity politics on local populations and their perceptions of legitimacy and resistance.
- The concept of 'the other' in counter-insurgency rhetoric and practice.
- The cultivation of particular colonial identities in the context of violence, analysing how violence shapes personal understandings and public performances of identity and belonging.
- It will also include case studies highlighting the intersection of identity and counter-insurgency across different regions and historical periods.



## Imagined Criminals: Forging/Building Criminal Identities in Colonial and Contemporary Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** **Thijs Costers** (Belgium) & **Aurélie Bouvart** (Belgium)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Building Criminal Identities in Colonial and Contemporary Africa.

### ABSTRACT

During the colonial era, the categorization of African identities was a common, multifaceted phenomenon. Through simplification, it served to facilitate colonial rule. One outcome of these taxonomies of otherness was the association of Africans with criminal categories built on European preconceptions about their identity. In colonial contexts, some African cultural practices were regarded as 'primitive', threatening the colonial order and interfering with the 'civilizing mission'. The subsequent criminalization of practices such as intoxicant use, infanticides or secret societies, had the effect that entire ethnic, socio-economic and religious groups were framed as 'criminal races' or 'criminal communities'. This panel thus aims to study how the criminalization of African identities manifested itself at the intersection of race, gender, class, age and religion. We also invite scholars studying postcolonial timeframes to explore how postcolonial states, navigating the remnants of colonial rule, have challenged, adapted or perpetuated these discourses and practices. Finally, to decenter the colonial viewpoint, this panel also wishes to examine how Africans appropriated criminal identities, including during the pre-colonial era. We therefore encourage contributions that focus on how certain groups reclaim(ed) an affiliation to criminal subcultures and/or intentionally coalesced around marginalized or subversive behaviors.

By bringing together interdisciplinary approaches, this panel aims to reflect on the complex intersections between African identities and the forging of criminal belongings. By uncovering the various relations between identity and the political (re)production of African criminalities, we hope to question and challenge understandings of the complex occurrences of belongings and their interrelations in Africa and beyond.

## Liberation struggles and religious identities – a contradiction, or a close bond?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Anja Schade (Germany) & Lena Dallywater (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The contributions to this panel discuss religious affiliation, faith and spirituality in the context of political activism or military engagement at both the micro and institutional levels.

### ABSTRACT

In this panel, we will focus on a part of identity that is still rarely considered in the context of political activism or military engagement: religious affiliation, faith, spirituality. The individual contributions will tell micro-stories based on individual biographies and life paths, but will also address organisational contexts such as the relationship between African liberation movements and the church - at home and abroad. Well-known streams such as Black Liberation Theology, Black Radicalism and African Nationalism are re-examined in the context of individual stories in transition. Although the panel will focus primarily on interdependencies in the middle of the 20th century and the perspectives of African actors, it will do so both with a view to historical changes and with special attention to transregional connections and entanglements.

## Medical Socialist Entanglements: Health Connections between Eastern Europe and Africa in the Global Cold War

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Alila Brossard Antonielli (Germany) & Jelena Đureinović (Austria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores medical socialist internationalism and exchanges between Eastern Europe and Africa during the Cold War, focusing on the circulation of public health models and people, ideas, knowledge and materials and the agency of both state- and non-state actors.

### ABSTRACT

A myriad of political, economic and cultural connections and exchanges developed between state-socialist Eastern Europe and the decolonising world from the 1950s. An always growing body of literature has explored various aspects of the East-South interconnections, but health and medicine demand more attention. On the other hand, global health history predominantly focuses on North American and Western European perspectives and there is still a need to recentre the field to peripheries and semi-peripheries. This panel explores socialist medicine and health connections between Eastern Europe and Africa and medical socialist internationalism in the global Cold War. The panel investigates medical socialist entanglements that intertwined geopolitical motivations, anti-colonial solidarity, development aid and business, and involved not only states, but also a multitude of diverse non-state actors. We welcome papers on the flow and exchange of people, ideas, knowledge and materials and on the circulations of public health models and medical technologies. We also invite researchers to present on imaginations and development of socialist medicine and postcolonial public health frameworks in Africa in connection to Eastern Europe and other socialist actors. The papers exploring medical socialist internationalism from the African perspectives are particularly welcome.

## More-than-Human Belongings: Societies and Environments in Central Africa (19th Century to the Present)

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Conservation & Land Governance

**ORGANISERS:** Benoît Henriët (Belgium) & Violette Pouillard (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to study the entanglements of human identities to their ecological contexts. It explores both the social nature of environmental policies and their impact on ecologies and seeks to contextualize historically-contingent paradigms that have been dominant since the colonial era.

### ABSTRACT

This panel brings together historians and anthropologists who study the entanglements of human identities and social dynamics to their ecological contexts. Its multidisciplinary contributions will address the complex tapestry of Central African ecosystems in the (post)colonial time. This framework will allow participants from diverse disciplines and backgrounds to discuss together the interweaving of place-based policies and global dynamics, and the related academic challenges. By doing so, participants will draw on Jonathan Saha’s argument that more-than-human perspectives “should further elucidate social divisions between humans, rather than obscure them” (Saha 2022). Participants will seek to:

Offer contributions addressing both the social nature of environmental policies and their impact on, and shaping by, animals, plants and ecologies. In so doing it aims to shed light on the “interpenetration of knowledge” (Beinart, Brown, Gilfoyle 2009) and the hybridity of environmental practices such as food collection, farming, fire management strategies and conservation policies, as well as on the complex, evolving inequalities associated with patterns of resource exploitation.

Contextualize and re-examine historically-contingent paradigms that have been dominant since the colonial era – such as discourses on productivity and sustainability imbued with top-down ‘development’ ideologies and invasive conservation policies – and which as a result have marginalised other options while also influencing the framing of many academic studies. By reflexively questioning the latter, this panel also seeks to shine a light on other historical paths, such as the management and protection of socio-environmental landscapes.

## Queer Mozambique: From the Mines to the Manas

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Francisco Miguel (Brazil) & Marc Epprecht (Canada)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel not only critically assesses studies on sexual and gender dissidence in Mozambique over the past hundred years but also presents original research on the current LGBTIQ+ movement in the country and the formation of new sexual and gender identities such as the *manas* trans.

### ABSTRACT

Mozambique has acquired a reputation in recent years as an outlier with relatively tolerant behaviors and laws regarding non-heterosexual relationships in Africa, where violence and rhetoric against LGBTIQ+ minorities are often pronounced. Mozambicans have also featured prominently in the historiography of gender and sexuality within the migrant labor system to South Africa since the late 19th century. However, Mozambicans have generally been spoken *about* rather than spoken *to* on these topics. The objective of this panel is not only to critically assess studies on sexual and gender dissidence in Mozambique over the past hundred years but also to present original research on the current LGBTIQ+ movement in the country and the formation of new sexual and gender identities such as those of the *manas* trans. How do we disentangle indigenous African, Afropolitan, and Afropean/diasporic influences on emerging forms of belonging and positioning? How do the particularities of Mozambique's relationship with the Indian Ocean world, settler colonialism, internal cultural diversity, and current position in the regional political economy impact expressions of identity, belonging, and exclusion? How do Mozambicans themselves perceive, produce, or act against the rapid contemporary transformations regarding new gender and sexuality expressions? In addressing these questions with plural and innovative methodological tools, the panel will be the first in English devoted to LGBTIQ+ issues in a Portuguese-speaking African country. Moreover, it will provide a valuable opportunity for anglophone scholars to access new debates and theories produced in the Lusophone community.

## Questioning the citizenship of the Pastoral Nomadic Fulani in West-Central Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Nicodemus Fru Awasom (Cameroon) & Hlengiwe Portia Dlamini (Swaziland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The pastoral nomadic Fulani in West Africa have come under scrutiny in recent times concerning issues of citizenship, identity and belonging and rejection. Using the “politics of belonging” as a conceptual frame, this panel attempts to explore this conundrum.

### ABSTRACT

The end of the cold War and the reintroduction of multipartyism in Africa raised the complicated issues of surrounding citizenship, identity and belonging, alongside their constitutive dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Using the “politics of belonging” as a conceptual frame, this panel attempts to explore the situation of the pastoral Nomadic Fulani who are a dominant nomadic group in the Sahel and semi-arid parts of West Africa. Owing to relatively recent changes in climate patterns, they have moved further south. As late arrivals with different physical features from their host communities, they are easily categorised as outsiders when conflicts erupt. This is precisely what has been happening in the past 35 years with the explosion of violence involving Fulani pastoralist herders as perpetrators and victims leading to thousands of deaths. The Fulani are increasingly rejected as citizens and undesirable elements and several attempts have been made to expel them from countries where they are legal citizens. In the North West region of Cameroon, the Mbororo-Fulani have fought back and laid claims to be indigenous citizens, taking advantage of their right to autonomy as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. How does this go down well with their host communities? This panel invites scholars to reflect on the identity crisis of the Pastoral Nomadic Fulani in a specific national setting in the context of autochthony and *allogenie* or the politics of belonging, bringing out how the Fulani negotiate their identity.

## Radio in African History

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Peter Brooke (United Kingdom) & Dina Ligaga (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How did the advent of radio technology shape African history and what role did it play in cultural production, identity formation, language and (trans)national politics?

### ABSTRACT

This panel invites papers on the history of radio in Africa, which continues to be the most popular mass medium on the continent to this day. Throughout much of its history radio was used as a tool of political control by the colonial and post-colonial state, designed to promote the statist projects of development and, later, nation-building. It was only in the 1990s that commercialisation and deregulation of radio in the majority of countries empowered the medium to escape the shadow of state-control, at least on paper if not always in practice. But recent research in the field has revealed that the airwaves were also crowded with sounds of subversion, sometimes from external stations and sometimes from individual broadcasters within the state system. Radio was also a critical arena for the negotiation of gender relations, ethnic identities and cultural divergences. Researching the history of radio poses significant methodological challenges but sound archives, oral histories, listener letters and innovative readings of official archives enable historians to shed new light on the political, social and cultural impact of radio.

### Reclaiming the Past, Redefining the Present: History Education and Identity Construction in Post-Colonial Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Brenda Nachuah Lawyer (Cameroon) & Nchamaze Arnold Akepu (Cameroon)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Expressions of identity in school disciplines have engendered questions of identity, belongings and exclusions. Can pedagogical innovations and critical perspectives in history education inspire paradigm shifts and theoretical reflections on North/South identity nexus in the African post-colony?

#### ABSTRACT

African identities have been shaped by colonial-era curricula, perpetuating self/other dichotomies and contested identities. Despite independence, these approaches have endured, particularly in History education, contributing to ambiguous belongings and exclusionary dynamics. Sustained in the African post colony by surviving didactical and pedagogical approaches bereft of Afro/Afri-centric praxis across didactics of disciplines, History education in particular seems to have bequeathed contested identities, warbling expressions of belongings and modes exclusion through exogenous productions of African, Afropolitan and Afropean constructs in the African post-colony. Questions of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, language, religion among others suffer from epistemological frontiers North/South identity nexus imbedded in history education curricula in African secondary schools. Complicated by issues of pedagogical innovations exposing Africans to critical perspectives of identity through the internet of things, the ways of thinking of and about Africa calls for theoretical reflections about Africa and the Global South. A transformed History education can empower Africans to rediscover their heritage, challenge prevailing narratives, and embrace a more diverse and inclusive understanding of their identities. By doing so, we can move towards a more nuanced and empowered understanding of African identities and their place in the world. However, can a paradigm shift in North/South identity entanglements be envisaged through curricula, pedagogical and didactical innovations in history education within African Schools and colleges over time, space and context?



## Reframing Angola's Liberation and Civil Wars

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** António Tomás (United States) & Jéssica Höring (Brazil)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to explore new perspectives on the Angolan Civil War by highlighting Angolan voices and lived experiences. By challenging dominant Cold War narratives, it discusses how the war reshaped identities and notions of belonging in Angola and its regional context.

### ABSTRACT

This panel seeks to re-examine Angola's liberation and civil wars from new perspectives emerging in the literature, focusing on the intersection of identity, geopolitics and lived experience. While often framed as a Cold War proxy conflict, this panel shifts the focus to Angolan voices and ethnographic perspectives, exploring the complex interplay between biographies and the local, regional and international dynamics of protracted conflicts.

As much of the writing on the Angolan wars has departed from the Cold War paradigm of proxy conflicts, we welcome chapters that challenge this view by exploring the war's role in regional transformations and situating these within broader African, Afropolitan and global contexts. The panel encourages analyses of how Angolans themselves navigated violence, displacement, and social fragmentation, revisiting the more personal and intimate dimensions of the conflict.

In line with the ECAS 2025 theme of African, Afropolitan and Afro-European belongings, this panel will address the complexities of identity formation in conflict zones and challenge dominant geopolitical narratives. It aims to explore how Angolans have experienced and interpreted the conflict, especially as the memorialisation of the war evolves through the increasing publication of autobiographies and biographies. Through interdisciplinary approaches and personal testimonies, it seeks to illuminate the complexities and ambiguities of Angolan history and raise important questions about the legacy of the war for new generations, with wider implications for African and transnational identities.

### Sources, interpretations and writings on African History: the challenges in the history production on Africa in the 21st century

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** **Silvester Trnovec** (Slovakia) & **Silvia Neposteri** (Italy)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel wishes to aim a critical discussion on the sources for African history (manuscripts, orality, interpretation of colonial and post-colonial documents), to examine methodological issues in working with them and to meditate on the 21st century challenges in publishing and digitizing them.

#### ABSTRACT

African history has become one of the prominent disciplines in historical studies. This strongly contrasts with the fact that in the 20th century, African history was not taken seriously in Europe. Colonialism removed entire regions and populations of the African continent from the history of the World, and Africans found themselves at the edge of the Eurocentric view of the world. Since the second half of the 20th century, this view of African history has largely been overcome thanks to the efforts of generations of historians. However, current debates on the decolonization of knowledge continue to point to the persistence of colonial stereotypes and prejudices in the knowledge about Africa, especially in Western academia. Despite the development in this field, the writing of African history continues to face challenges, primarily in the availability of sources and their interpretation. African history has been shaped by thousands of years of populations, cultures and civilizations that have left behind rich and complex archaeological, artistic, oral and written legacies. The aim of this panel is to provide a critical discussion on the identification, analysis and interpretation of sources regarding African history, from antiquity to the modern and contemporary period.

Organized by the General Committee of the international project “Fontes Historiae Africanae / The Sources for African History” (a long-term research initiative of the International Union of Academies), this panel will bring together scholars to explore innovative approaches and methodologies that can contribute to the evolving understanding of Africa’s rich and complex historical legacies.

## Teaching and Research on African History from Brazil: Political Approaches and Epistemic Critiques from the Global South

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Maria Cristina Cortez Wissenbach (Brazil) & Núbia Aguilar Moreno (Brazil)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel's contribution is to revisit topics related to African history, the diaspora, and the formation of Brazilian society, aiming to overcome the normalization of exploitation perpetuated by the slave society, the exclusionary policies, and the racism that followed.

### ABSTRACT

In Brazil, with the institutional framework of Law 10.639/03, which establishes the obligation to teach the history of Africa and Afro-descendant peoples, we have witnessed a growing social interest in understanding the connection between the past and present with the African continent. As we move beyond twenty years since its enactment, we observe both progress and ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. The implementation has paved the way for new approaches to tackling discrimination, inequality, and racism, expanding the spaces gained since the 1988 Constitution and through social movements, while also raising new questions. In the academic environment, alongside important public policies such as affirmative action laws introduced in federal and state higher education institutions, which have diversified the student profile, current research aims to address these new demands. This includes the formative role of training professionals for research and teaching, as well as exploring themes that help to understand the complex past and sensitive issues involved. It is noteworthy that Brazil is the second country with the largest number of self-declared Black people, after Nigeria. The objective of this panel is to present some of these aspects—education, research, and the adoption of public policies—by examining the context in which the implementation of Law 10.639/03 has made it possible to open up perspectives on research conducted on the African continent within Brazilian territory.

## Teaching the Atlantic Slave Trade through Ghanaian Sites of Memory

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Jeremy Ball (United States) & Ato Eshun (Ghana)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

What do sites of memory have to teach about the trans-Atlantic slave trade? Our panel focuses on three sites of memory: Cape Coast, El Mina, and Christiansborg castles. These castles functioned for centuries as trade forts and military outposts for European empires on Africa's west coast.

### ABSTRACT

This panel will focus on public history at sites of historical trauma and effective pedagogies for teaching the trans-Atlantic slave trade (AST) to university and high school students. A pedagogical challenge of teaching the AST is to understand the lived and traumatic experiences of individuals impacted by the AST. A core challenge to teaching this subject in an empathetic manner is how to teach the experiences of real people imprisoned in the forts, especially given the paucity of primary sources from an enslaved person's perspective. Panelists will focus on three castles: Elmina, Cape Coast, and Christiansborg, in Ghana. None of these castles have detailed exhibits explaining their long histories, so interpretation is primarily the responsibility of individual docents leading visitors on tours. This interpretive responsibility is especially significant because the castles themselves are sites of witness to the brutality and trauma of the AST. One of our presenters, the Director of the Central Region Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, will focus on the training of docents and some of the daily challenges docents face. We will discuss how the castles themselves serve as powerful sites of memory and witness. We'll discuss the ethics of visiting the castles. We would also welcome additional papers about other African public history sites, especially sites of trauma.

## The contested memory of anti-colonial and post-colonial wars

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Ana Margarida Sousa Santos (United Kingdom) & Justin Pearce (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We examine the afterlives of liberation, decolonisation and conflict and the ways in which different actors interpret and experience them. We engage with representation and imaginaries of liberation movements and colonial armies and compare differing, but often overlapping, experiences and memories.

### ABSTRACT

Recent literature on the wars of liberation and post-independence conflict in southern Africa explores in creative and critical ways the narratives of liberation and of allegiance to empire, the afterlives of wars and their enduring reverberations. The study of remembrance, forms of representation, commemorative efforts, fictional and non-fiction accounts have enriched our understanding and provided further nuanced perspectives on the experiences of soldiers and their families. Focusing on the aftermath of liberation, in historically and geographically diverse cases from Africa and Europe, we will interrogate how soldiers and their families navigate post-colonial spaces. We will consider the memories and legacies of war, and the way they play out in the lives of soldiers. By inviting inquiries into the lives of veterans on opposing sides of liberation wars and civil war, the panel probes at the parallels and distinctions between combatants in different settings, the potential for networks of veterans to bring about forms of inclusion and exclusion, political demands, and shifts in understandings of war and its consequences.

The panel invites contributions that interrogate the ambivalent afterlives of liberation, decolonisation and conflict and the ways in which different actors interpret and experience the transformation that accompanies processes of decolonisation and intra-state conflict, and extends beyond them. We especially encourage submissions that critically engage with representation and imaginaries of liberation movements and colonial armies, and comparatively consider the differing, but often overlapping, experiences and memories of conflict.

## The Past and Future of the Humanities at African Universities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Edgar Taylor (Uganda) & Natasha Erlank (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines the state of the humanities at African universities during a period of expansion and pressure to produce practical research that facilitates neoliberal governance. It assesses South-South collaborations, curriculum design, and career aspirations of humanities scholars in Africa.

### ABSTRACT

Graduate training in the humanities at African universities has expanded precipitously over the past decade. Nevertheless, the growth in the number of humanities degrees has come at a time of crisis for humanistic thought not only in the academy but across many societies where neoliberal governance has privileged STEM fields and pressured humanities scholars to defend their work by providing neatly packaged policy recommendations in the tradition of quantitative social science and NGO writing. This panel examines how graduate programmes in African universities have revised their graduate programmes over the past decade to respond to the opportunities of graduate training and South-South collaborations in addition to the challenges posed by the demands of donors and governments for "practical" policy-oriented research that inhibits the "slow" and conceptual insights of humanistic scholarship. The panel will focus on three areas in the expansion of humanities research. First, how have departments in humanities disciplines at African universities changed their graduate curricula in recent years? What pressures and fissures has curriculum design exposed within and across humanities disciplines? Second, how have collaborations between universities or individual departments within Africa, within the Global South, or across continents shaped the opportunities and priorities of graduate education in the humanities? Third, what are the research priorities and career aspirations of a new generation of humanities scholars in African universities? The panel particularly aims to situate these questions in historical context of African universities, which have faced similar struggles over definitions of relevance and professionalization since the 1960s.

## Understanding African Borderlands from Below: Mobilities, Popular Economies, Everyday Peace-building, and Self-determination [CRG-ABORNE]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Nicholas Nyachega (United States) & David Glovsky (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel brings together scholars who approach borderlands ‘from below.’ It attempts to understand economic mobility and associated complex identity politics, as well as everyday peacebuilding and self-determination in borderlands, by emphasizing non-state or local views and strategies

### ABSTRACT

Mainstream understandings of African borderlands primarily derive from state-centric models that privilege how states ‘see,’ control socio-economic mobilities across state borders, and use borders as efficient technologies of state-making and power. Most discussions of cross-border trade center on questions of legality and formality, characterizing informal trade as an aberration that governments work to stop. In doing so, scholars privilege a state-centric vision of borders and mobility that is often misaligned with the reality of many African borderlanders. Furthermore, discussions about peace-building and security in conflict-prone borderlands often adopt ‘top-down’ approaches and views. This panel, therefore, brings together scholars who approach borderlands ‘from below.’ It attempts to understand economic mobility and associated complex identity politics, as well as everyday peacebuilding and self-determination in borderlands, by emphasizing local views and strategies. While states may have the power to shape the movement of people, goods, ideas, etc., across borders and determine peace-making processes and policies, this panel will reveal the limits of such powers to underscore how non-state actors like borderlanders reshape state processes ‘from below.’ We will explore the possibilities that might emerge when state and non-state actors in the borderlands collaboratively utilize approaches ‘from below’ to address historical conflicts and unsettled differences. We ask what possibilities and challenges emerge when scholars ‘see like borderlanders’ and emphasize popular narratives of cross-border economies that counter state-centric visions of borders and border crossings, as well as everyday peace and self-determination.

## Wine, Empire and Afro-European Connectivities c.1880–1960s

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** History

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Paul Nugent (United Kingdom) & Isabella Soi (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel will address the connections between Europe, North and South Africa with respect to viticulture/oenology and the role of migrants as workers and vectors of knowledge. The panel addresses how the multi-directional flows of people and knowledge shaped the wine sectors in each of the regions.

### ABSTRACT

The panel explores the manner in which nationalist, imperial and post-colonial projects in Africa and Europe were bound together through wine, the vine and the forms of knowledge and everyday practice associated with each of them. Wine and the vine are not normally considered central to the shaping of Afro-European connections. However, the panel will show how they were not just central to European economy and society, but also to the entangled histories of Europe, North and Southern Africa. The panel will build on an emerging historiography that goes beyond a framing of imperial centres and colonial margins and instead explores the way in which they were mutually constituting at the level of imaginaries, production and daily life. The structures of production straddled continents, with farmworkers and settlers, planting materials and scientific knowledge all circulating between colonies and continents.

The panel addresses (i) the connections between viticulture and oenology in southern Europe and North Africa, and the role of migrants as workers and vectors of knowledge (ii) the South African engagement with Europe and North Africa in terms of travelling models (co-operatives), vines and expertise (iii) and the exchange of knowledge between African and European research institutions in response to phylloxera. Although the end of formal empire impacted the structures of production and racial hierarchies, wine remained crucial to the relationship. The panel will therefore discuss how wine can be used as a lens to explore deeper Afro-European and intra-African connectivities in the twentieth century.



## Language and Literature

### “Next Generation” African Immigrant Literature: African and Afropean Belongings

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Cheryl Toman (United States) & Grace Danquah (Ghana)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks analyses of “next generation” immigrant texts in any language illustrating African and Afropean belongings. These very recent texts are markedly different from earlier works by immigrant writers. Theories for analysis include Miano's *Afropea* and Etoke's *Black Existential Freedom*.

#### ABSTRACT

In her book, *Afropea: A Post-Western and Post-Racist Utopia* (2024), Leonora Miano gives a prominent place to those whose identities blend African and European roots, stating that they are potentially at the forefront of an “anti-racist societal project.” Miano’s concept acknowledges an awareness that being an immigrant in Europe today means living “in a society grappling with identity tensions.” In complement to Miano’s theories are those presented by Nathalie Etoke in *Black Existential Freedom* (2022) which aims to dissociate Blackness from victimization by analyzing “the complexities of racialized identity in a globalized contemporary society.” Miano’s and Etoke’s theories are a sampling of the theorists useful in analyses of “next generation” African immigrant literature. “Next generation” texts are very recent and remarkably different than those written twenty or thirty years ago falling within Jacques Chevrier’s definition of *migritude* (2004). “Next generation” writers even diverge from views held by their counterparts publishing a decade earlier who grappled with home and nation, as described by Ayo Coly in *The Pull of Postcolonial Nationhood* (2010). One example of this “next generation” is Roukiata Ouedraogo and her largely autobiographical novel *Du miel sous les Galettes*, told from her view as a baby carried on her mother’s back in Burkina Faso. These chapters alternate with those told by the adult narrator, crediting publicly her successful career to a blend of her “mooréphone” / “francophone” identities, going beyond embracing hybridity. This panel seeks analyses of “next generation” immigrant texts in any language illustrating African and Afropean belongings.

### African consciousness, diasporic consciousness, Afropolitanism: aesthetic, epistemological and political issues

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Sylvère Mbondobari (France) & Mamadou Ba (Senegal)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Epistemological and political foundations of the concepts of African consciousness, diasporic consciousness, Afropolitanism. The conditions of possibility for an Afropolitan stylistics, aesthetics and poetics. Diasporic conditions and intersectionality

#### ABSTRACT

In his essay *Sortir de la grande nuit*, Mbembe raises the question of origins and cosmopolitanism from an African perspective. The answer he proposes is a conceptual notion designed to go beyond anti-colonial thinking, Négritude and pan-Africanism, which he calls 'Afropolitanism'. Through literary and artistic fiction, writers, artists and intellectuals retrace the trajectories of the Afropean and reflect on his relationship with the Other and globalisation.

The panel proposes to reflect on the notions of 'African consciousness' and 'diasporic consciousness' (Etoke/Miano) and to determine as precisely as possible the relationships that these notions imply with literary and artistic creation, traditional media and new media. The approaches taken to date will have to be challenged for at least three reasons: (1) the critique of Paul Gilroy's work calls for a conceptual reassessment and a broadening of the notion of 'black diaspora' within the framework of globalized studies, which would take account of contemporary circulation between North and South, but also of circulations within Africa (Mbembe); (2) we should consider the openings offered by notions such as Afropolitanism, declosion (Mbembe), Afropeanism (Selasi/Miano) and Melancholia Africana (Etoké), which define African-european identities. We have identified four main areas of focus:

- Epistemological and political foundations of the concepts African consciousness, diasporic consciousness, Afropolitanism.
- The conditions of possibility of an Afropolitan stylistics, aesthetics and poetics.
- Diasporic conditions and intersectionality.
- Writing everyday life, writing history from an Afropolitan perspective.
- Transnationalism: the question of return between utopia and pragmatism.

## After and Before Colonialism: Interrogating the Epistemological Grounds for Violence in Contemporary African Literature

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Ignatius Chukwumah (Nigeria) & Cheela Chilala (Zambia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel interrogates the violence enacted by the peri-(post)colonial encounter between Europe and Africa as represented in history and in (first generation) African fiction by baring its epistemological foundations, while noting their wider implications today for Africa.

### ABSTRACT

This panel thus seeks to interrogate the epistemological grounds for making sense of violence against the background of the events prior to and after colonialism in Africa (as represented in African literature) and to understand what indigenous frames could be deployed to cognise what constitutes violence, including how knowledge and belief systems (epistemologies) about violence are constructed (and represented in literature). This involves questioning how colonial and postcolonial understandings of violence have been shaped by different ways of knowing and interpreting reality. It also seeks to address how colonial epistemologies imposed by colonial powers influenced African perceptions and depictions of violence, including how these colonial knowledge systems persist and are critiqued or rejected in contemporary African literature. By focusing on contemporary literature, it reveals how modern African writers engage with, critique, or redefine the epistemological frameworks established during and after colonialism, which helps in understanding how literature challenges or reinforces existing knowledge about violence. The panel highlights the relationship between power and knowledge, exploring how dominant epistemological frameworks can perpetuate violence or create spaces for resistance and alternative understandings, especially how literature can either uphold or contest these power dynamics. Investigating epistemological grounds for violence would allow for a deeper appreciation of how African writers assert their intellectual and cultural agency while showing how they construct new narratives and knowledge systems that offer alternative perspectives on violence and its impacts, or how the legacy of colonialism and its impacts continue to manifest in various forms of violence in contemporary contexts.

## Belonging in Africa, belonging in the world – the role of language

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Sarita Henriksen (Mozambique) & Bert Van Pinxteren (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Belonging is inevitably mediated through language. Panel examines the conflict between indigenous African and colonial languages in the mediation of knowledge and belonging. What does this conflict mean for international identity politics and for African, Afropolitan or Afropean modes of belonging?

### ABSTRACT

Belonging has been described as ‘a feeling of being happy or comfortable as part of a particular group and having a good relationship with the other members of the group because they welcome you and accept you’. Such belonging is inevitably mediated through language – language of the immediate family and surroundings, language of wider communication, or international language. In African contexts, these languages are not treated equally, leading to specific types of entanglements, exclusions, conflict of identities and positionalities. This panel examines African-based and other critical forms of theorizing concerning the orthodoxy, and complexity, in which access to, or belonging within, wider communities is dependent on a corresponding access to colonial languages, in stark contrast to the situation in other continents. In the global North, some form of higher education is available to nearly 80% of the population – this could only be achieved because much of this education is provided in indigenous languages – whereas, in sub-Saharan Africa, access to higher education is still limited to around 10% of the population – and is provided in colonial languages. If higher education in Africa is to expand significantly, as specified for example in the UN SDG ‘Education for All’, this has to change. This will mean that, for Africans, access to knowledge and belonging to wider communities will progressively be mediated through indigenous languages. The panel examines what the potential conflict here would mean for international identity politics, and in particular for African, Afropolitan or Afropean modes of belonging.

### Bi/multilingualism, altering identities, and trans-border migrations: The socio-economic impacts of foreign languages commodification in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Delphine Nkeke (United Kingdom) & Ifeyinwa Genevieve Okolo (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel invites diverse perspectives that examine the socio-economic impacts of foreign language commercialisation in Africa, including exposure to languages from the prosperous nations of Asia such as China, Korea, and Japan.

#### ABSTRACT

From the learning of the English, French, and Portuguese languages in parts of the continent owing to European colonisation, Africans have enjoyed some economic benefits of bi/multilingualism, such as increased employability, higher wages, and enhanced business opportunities. Consequently, Africans have been drawn into further learning of foreign languages, disregarding indigenous ones. European languages which had little or no colonial presence on the continent such as Spanish, Italian, and German, and others like Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean, are now being taught in parts of the continent. This ongoing commodification of foreign languages presents a unique intersection of socio-economic dynamics, influencing migration, identity and belonging as well as development and globalization. This panel seeks to explore the evolving dynamics of language commercialization and politics in Africa and its diasporas by critically interrogating the social capital aspects, including improved social mobility, greater access to education, and strengthened cultural identity. The panel seeks papers that examine, but not limited to, how language skills and practices contribute to economic gains, deepen the understanding of bi/multilingualism's multilayered impact on African identities, address challenges such as linguistic inequality and the potential marginalisation of indigenous languages, and interrogate the exploitative nature of foreign language commodification wherein Africans pay exorbitant fees for language proficiency tests.

### Bodies in motion: Gendered (im)mobilities and sexualised belonging in African/Afropean cultural imaginings and contexts

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** GIBSON NCUBE (South Africa) & Tendai Mangena (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how gender and sexuality intersect with mobility, immobility, and belonging in Africa and Afropean contexts. It examines how gender and sexual norms and identities are shaped by diverse practices of mobility and displacement, real and symbolic.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel will examine the ways in which gender and sexuality interconnect with practices of mobility, immobility and belonging within Africa and Afropean contexts. The main interest is in how such movements can shape our thinking on gender and sexual norms and especially how (un)belonging is negotiated through (im)mobility.

This panel will grapple with how the experience of (im)mobility is at once gendered and gendering and how it has an impact on how people understand gender and sexual identities and their sense of belonging. The panel will focus on the following questions, amongst a host of others: How do African cultural imaginings represent women, non-hegemonic masculinities, queer, and nonbinary people's experiences of journeys and journeying (actual and symbolic), migration and exile? How are these subjects positioned within nationalist/global discourses that often frame them as out of place and outsiders, or deny them full belonging? How is (im)mobility navigated in gendered and gendering spaces and practices? What are the ramifications of (im)mobilities for the rethinking of African gender and sexual norms, especially in diasporic and transnational settings?

This panel will, therefore, focus on the negotiations of gendered and sexualised subjects as they move across physical and metaphorical borders. Papers in the panel will engage with the tensions between freedom and constraint, inclusion and exclusion, belonging and unbelonging, homely and unhomely and the potential for advancing new ways of understanding how belonging and identity are negotiated through (im)mobility within an ever interconnecting yet disconnecting world.

## Founding mothers. “Bidirectional and intersecting mechanisms of belonging and othering in South African literature written by women”

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Martina Vitackova (Belgium) & Marni Bonthuys (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel investigates the mechanisms of belonging and othering in South African literature written by women, both historically and contemporarily, while approaching these from an intersectional angle.

### ABSTRACT

According to Mary West (2009:13), “‘Be-longing’ [...] is the national obsession in literature produced in South Africa [...].” Although she primarily refers to white women writers, it functions as a leitmotiv for many South African authors coming from diverse backgrounds. In her conspicuous monograph she draws an immediate connection between belonging and the apartheid period, while charting how prominent it still is.

In our proposed panel, we want to investigate how such mechanisms of belonging manifest themselves in South African literature written by women, both historically and contemporarily. This extensive time span facilitates meticulously unpacking these mechanisms, since they are bound up with concepts like roots, heritage, legacy, literary tradition and maternal ancestors. We want to approach belonging from an intersectional angle, looking at how it is interlaced with overlapping axes of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age and others. After all, “narratives of belonging [...] are always mediated by numerous intersectional factors” (Ngabaza, Shefer & Clowes, 2018:143). Moreover, we are interested in how belonging is inextricably linked to its ostensible opposite of ‘othering’ as explored by scholars such as Sylvia Tamale (2020) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000). We regard these intertwined dynamics as bidirectional processes with both dominant and dominated groups engaging in them when shaping their identity politics. Nevertheless, we also acknowledge what Yuval-Davis (2006:203) designates as the “possibility of struggle and resistance” when the latter consciously demolish these through for instance feminist or egalitarian counterreactions.

## Multi-faceted Belongings in Afropean Literatures: Identities, Cultures, and Aesthetics

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Sandra Folie (Germany) & Isabella Villanova (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel focuses on Afropean literatures and revisits issues of migration, diaspora, Afropolitanism, resistance, (un)belonging, and intersectionality. In addition to the pluralistic conceptions of identity and culture in these literatures, the panel also explores their innovative aesthetics.

### ABSTRACT

It might be challenging to trace “the Afropean” solely by ethnic or geographical lines. Some Afropeans were born in Europe, others immigrated and may have returned to Africa, or moved elsewhere. Some may identify as Black, others as *of colour*, etc. The literature by and about Afropeans is characterised by a plurality of languages, African heritages, European locations, and diverse notions of race and ethnicity that reflect the specificities of individual experiences in different cultural and national contexts. Afropean authors often tackle the complex conditions of their protagonists who experience unbelonging, marginalisation, and otherness in Europe due to the combination of racism, sexism, and classism. At the same time, many Afropean authors embody the characteristics of the relatively privileged Afropolitan who “belongs to no single geography but feels at home in many” (Selasi 2005). 21st-century Afropean literatures often reflect on their dynamic lifestyles and the resulting innovative thinking and political ideologies while also critically analysing the contrast between ‘third-world victim narratives’ and ‘Afropolitan success stories’. It is unsurprising, though occasionally overlooked, that the plural identities and cultures of the authors, narrators, and protagonists are frequently mirrored in equally plural *Afropean Aesthetics* (Oholi 2024)—e.g. strategies of transcultural appropriation such as shuffling hierarchies through irony, multilingualism, and intertextuality. We welcome contributions from a broad range of critical perspectives (e.g. post-/decolonial, queer, intersectional, affective, environmental) that explore the multi-faceted belongings in Afropean literatures, both thematically and aesthetically, as represented in texts written in various languages by authors of diverse African heritages.



## Navigating the complexities of systemic diglossia in African and Afropean communities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Luqman Yusuff (Nigeria) & Tom Mboya (Kenya)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Despite the function of diglossia in fostering adequate human communication, systemic diglossia in form of colonial languages and African indigenous languages in African communities creates power elites and linguistic prestige resulting in complex linguistic behaviour deserving further interrogation

### ABSTRACT

In social interaction, the conditional use of two languages in a community is not an uncommon phenomenon. It fosters adequate human communication, enhances identity expression and cements social relations. However, in the African contexts, European colonisation has led to diglossia, which is a situation involving the coexistence of indigenous languages with colonial languages thereby creating a hybrid linguistic environment. Apart from Ethiopia and Tanzania, where diglossia is not consequent upon the existence of colonial languages, most African countries have made colonial languages an emblem of prestige. With the official status of colonial languages in these African countries, the power elite have appropriated them as status symbols, in addition to their roles in education, media and governance. Just as in Africa, there seems to be a prevalence of diglossia in Afropean communities. Despite moves for integration, diglossia is having a serious impact on what it means to be an Afropean. It is in this regard that this panel invites papers and presentations that explore, discuss and interrogate the complex linguistic behaviour arising from diglossia in African and Afropean communities, with a view to understanding the impact of this systemic diglossia on language empowerment and endangerment, emergence of pidgins and creoles, management of communication space, and politics of the nation. Furthermore, the panel also seeks to discuss how this linguistic phenomenon impacts on literacy, education and social interaction of their respective communities.

## Re-imagining Citizenship and Locality: African Diasporas in Europe

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Language and Literature

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Patricia Chimsewa (Malawi) & Geoffrey Nsanja (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Exploring how African diasporas in Europe redefine citizenship, belonging, & identity, focusing on the shift from national to local identity. It examines how cultural & linguistic resources shape Afropean identities in diverse cities & the role of migration, race, & politics in this identity formation

### ABSTRACT

#### Re-imagining Citizenship and Locality: African Diasporas in Europe

Patricia Chimsewa, MUBAS & Geoffrey Nsanja PhD, University of Leeds

“Afropean” identities are increasingly being discursively performed in ‘superdiverse’ contexts. With this in mind, this panel will explore the evolving concepts of citizenship, belonging, and identity among African diasporas in Europe, with a focus on the shift from nationality to locality in diasporic identity formations. At the heart of this will be an elucidation of how the social semiotic resources and “lingua-cultures” brought along to these contexts are increasingly reshaping these identities and creating perpetual liminality. In bringing the embodied nature of these identities to the fore, the panel will highlight the dialogic nature of selfhood as “Afropeans” use portable semiotic resources to make sense of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in the super-diverse and unstable social milieu they find themselves. The panel will further examine how migration policies, race, and identity politics intersect to redefine what it means to belong for African communities in European cities. Thus, the panel will seek to shed light on the dialogic interplay between ‘social structure’ and individual agency in “Afropean” identity formation. Discussions could therefore delve into how “Afropean” identities are negotiated not just through national affiliations but through local and urban experiences, where place-based connections often replace traditional notions of national belonging. The panel would also address the challenges and opportunities that arise when African diasporic identities are reimagined through localities, highlighting the fluidity of belonging in increasingly intercultural, multicultural and transnational European contexts.

## Law

### African judiciaries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Law

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Gabrielle Lynch (United Kingdom) & Mariam Kamunyu (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

African judiciaries are increasingly called upon to decide on matters of the utmost political significance with massive implications for perceptions and realities of equality and justice - from maternal health rights to who has the right to form associations and who wins an election.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel looks at the role of African judiciaries in helping to promote - and perhaps also inadvertently undermine - perceptions and realities of equality and justice in contemporary Africa.

Gabrielle Lynch (University of Warwick), "Ideas of the good judge"

Drawing from interviews with judges and their close observers, this paper looks at how judges understand their role - both on and off the bench - in hybrid regimes.

Mikhail Nyamweya (University of Oxford), "Navigating Political Rhetoric and Public Perceptions in African Identities: The Case of Kenya's Judiciary"

This paper explores the complex interplay between political rhetoric, public perception, and judicial independence in Kenya, emphasizing how these elements intersect with African, Afropolitan, and Afropean identities.

Jessica Hickle (Yale University), "Post-election Litigation: Why Losing Candidates Contest Election Results in Court"

This paper seeks to explain litigation by losing political candidates using an original dataset of presidential candidates in African elections over the last 25 years and contribute to our understanding of the strategic use of judicial institutions by opposition parties in weakly democratic contexts.

Mariam Kamunyu (Cardiff University), "Unveiling the minimum core obligation in maternal health: A feminist reading of Bungoma County v Josephine Oundo Ongwen"

This paper presents a feminist analysis of a Kenyan Court of Appeal judgment and highlights the broader implications of the court's finding for the realisation of reproductive rights in Kenya and beyond.

## Contested law: between principles, pragmatics and belonging (sponsored by AFRICA: Journal of the International African Institute)

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Law

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Maxim Bolt (United Kingdom) & Deborah James (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Law refracts questions of African national and continental belonging, and global/Northern legacies and influence. These pertain to histories and to future possibilities. Taking the complexities of belonging as a lens, we explore popular and professional experiences with legal legacies and futures.

### ABSTRACT

Law refracts questions of African national and continental belonging, and how these relate to global/Northern legacies. African legal frameworks are grounded in the past: histories of government and judgment, which may be claimed as distinctly local, or depicted as ‘invented’ or imposed. (They may be seen as both, as in customary law debates). Equally, law promises better futures. These may take the form of new emancipatory frameworks, or law may guarantee progress by honouring popular or ‘practical norms’. Constitutions drawing on ideas of globalised provenance are lauded as remaking societies and superseding colonial principles, or derided as smuggling in precepts from the global North. The resulting arguments produce fields of legal practice and activism that themselves ground national and regional belonging – from social justice movements to apex courts whose judgments draw on an archive of wisdom from within the continent. Everyday popular engagements with law are as crucial as professional ones. They range from seeking access to justice among the marginalised, to deploring uneven state administration of economic lives, concerning matters of work, debt, property and inheritance. How far do legal principles reflect belonging by recognising shared notions of fairness? Are legal institutions and processes viewed as belonging to the people and catering to their needs? Law offers a potent symbol of national and African belonging, but also globalised influence, the meaning of each contested. Taking the complexities of belonging as a lens, we seek papers that explore both popular and professional experiences with legal legacies and futures.

## The Ecological Embrace in Africa: Framing Justice and Law in Human and More-Than-Human Relational Terms

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Law

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** **Melanie Jean Murcott** (South Africa) & **Veronica Federico** (Italy)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines whether and how African legal frameworks embrace ecological justice by recognizing the interconnectedness of human and more-than-human relations, addressing pressing environmental crises, and promoting ecologically-centred epistemologies of law and justice.

### ABSTRACT

As Africa faces the mounting pressures of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, there is a growing recognition of the need to redefine environmental law and justice in relational terms. This panel will explore the "ecological embrace" within African legal systems, focusing on the one hand on experiences of recognition of the rights and interests of non-human entities—such as ecosystems, animals, and landscapes-, and, on the other hand, on the critical discourse concerning the very concept of a "resource," moving beyond the reduction of natural elements like water, forests, and biodiversity to mere economic commodities. By framing law in terms of human and more-than-human relations, this panel seeks to understand how law can move beyond colonially imposed anthropocentric paradigms.

At the heart of this discussion are reflections on intersectional justice itself. How can laws better reflect the interrelated rights and needs of ecosystems, animals, and other non-human entities? What role does African philosophy, including ubuntu and other relational worldviews, play in shaping inclusive "more-than-human" legal systems? How do and can legal frameworks in Africa and beyond incorporate into natural resource governance various cosmovisions, principles, and practices that recognize the interconnectedness of all living and non-living entities?

The panel welcomes case-studies and comparative analysis, and it is open to multidisciplinary approaches, engaging legal studies with social sciences and ecological research.

## Politics and International Relations

### (Post-)Colonial Echoes in Russia's War against Ukraine

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Lukas Ivanauskas (Lithuania) & Patryk Labuda (Austria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel examines global responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, exploring diverse narratives and identities, and how they shape global politics of war. Special attention is given to diverging and converging post-colonial interpretations stemming from Africa and Central and Eastern Europe

#### ABSTRACT

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has elicited diverse responses globally. The West has demonstrated unprecedented solidarity with Ukraine, providing political, diplomatic, military, and humanitarian support, hosting millions of Ukrainian refugees, and imposing sanctions to isolate Russia. However, some voices from Africa have criticised what they see as hypocrisy and double standards in the international community, highlighting the lack of comparable solidarity during crises in places like Sudan, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia.

Russia's self-depiction as a "non-colonial power" also resonates with countries that have experienced colonialism, framing the conflict through a 'West vs. the Rest' narrative. In contrast, politicians, diplomats, and intellectuals from Ukraine and neighbouring countries are urging both 'Western' and African partners to reframe Russia's war through a post-colonial lens, viewing it as a continuation of Russia's historically imperial policies in their neighbourhood regions.

The panel aims to examine the diverse narratives and identities that underlie the varying global responses and perceptions of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. By dissecting these narratives, the panel will also provide deeper insights into how identity and transregional historical narratives are applied in contemporary global alignments, and how they impact foreign policy strategies and decisions, state-society relations, transitional justice, and global conflict dynamics (including both Ukraine and Russia's actions). Particular focus will be given to critically evaluating the theoretical and practical utility and limitations of post-colonial lenses to Russia's war in Ukraine.

## A New Cold War? Africa's Place in the Emerging Global Order

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Ana Cristina Alves (Morocco) & John H.S. Åberg (Morocco)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel brings together 6-7 scholars from Europe and Africa contributing to a *Third World Quarterly* special issue. They will explore African agency in key domains of great power competition in Africa - security, digital, multilateralism, and infrastructure. Audience feedback is encouraged.

### ABSTRACT

Prevailing narratives often describe Africa's role in global dynamics as part of a 'New Cold War', positioning the continent once again as a geopolitical battleground for external powers. While the idea of a 'new scramble for Africa' may be overstated, the surge in diplomatic visits from global powers signals heightened competition for influence. The US, after years of neglect, is refocusing on Africa, driven by China's expanding economic reach and Russia's military presence. These developments underscore Africa's central role in great power rivalry.

This competition raises critical questions about African agency. How are African states navigating these power struggles, and what role do they play in shaping the emerging global order? Rather than being passive recipients of foreign interests, African governments and elites are actively engaging with global powers, seeking to leverage this competition for their own goals. However, entrenched power inequalities—rooted in histories of domination and marginalisation—still shape Africa's position in global negotiations.

Understanding how African leaders assert agency, and how national and pan-African identities influence this agency, is key. How do African states navigate these unequal dynamics while advancing their strategic interests? Can Africa reshape its relations with global powers to reduce dependency, or are Cold War-era patterns of exclusion and marginalisation being reproduced?

This panel examines these questions from an International Relations perspective, analysing the intersections of identity, power, and agency in Africa's evolving role in great power competition.

## Africa and the Changing World Order – Opportunity for Re-Positioning in the Age of Uncertainties [Africa in the World]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Istvan Tarrosy (Hungary) & Jan Zahorik (Czech Republic)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel invites scholars to address aspects of the changing world order with regard to Africa’s position in the global arena. These may include security concerns, economic issues, military involvement, environmental and health challenges, democratization, civil society, and development.

AEGIS CRG panel

### ABSTRACT

Series of coups in West African Sahel, Egypt and Ethiopia joining BRICS as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, China’s and Russia’s growing presence in Africa – just a few examples of changing Africa’s position in the global arena. The long-standing dominance of the EU and the USA in Africa seems to come to its end and is being constantly challenged by both big/regional powers, as well as such “newcomers” as Turkey, Indonesia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a growing literature on the changing world order, as well as the transformation of Africa within global politics. Some underscore Africa’s position in the changing world order from the perspective of periphery from which (while still being on the margins of global politics) Africa is making a difference in global affairs. In an age of uncertainties and unpredictability, statecraft and pragmatism are again high on national and multilateral agendas, bearing also in mind the core item of inequality. Various African countries have become prospective actors in global politics performing significant economic and demographic growth (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo, Tanzania, among others) or making progress with innovations and digitalization (e.g. Rwanda, Kenya). Others have been struggling with the emergence of violent extremist organizations and insurgent non-state actors, which requires a better understanding of the context of state fragility and ungoverned spaces. The (possibly multiple-session) panel wishes to deal with several of these intertwining aspects, offering the ground for discussion about Africa’s possible global re-positioning.



## Africa in international climate negotiations: hopes and disillusion in three decades of UN arenas

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Louis Narcisse Ngonu (Cameroon) & Bruno Mve Ebang (Gabon)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to analyze the place of the African continent in global climate governance. Its objective is to understand the positioning of a united and plural Africa, oscillating between distrust and growing involvement in a complex cooperative framework.

### ABSTRACT

For several decades, climate change has been on the international agenda as a major collective governance concern. Backed by an evolving legal and institutional framework, this governance will bring together rational countries and regions of the world constantly making cost/opportunity trade-offs in the face of the common imperative of saving the planet. International climate negotiations will then turn into strategic meetings where national agendas tend to be safeguarded by the different countries. Sensitive to environmental concerns, Africa has never missed these major UN discussions. In three decades of rounds of negotiations, it will gradually become involved in the international climate regime after an initial phase of distrust characterized by regional socio-political and economic concerns which are rooted in crises, instabilities and above all in a perplexed and imbalance of international regimes and the international order in general. By gradually getting involved in complex climatic arenas, Africa is trying to weigh in on the scales, to take better advantage of climate governance under construction. In this logic, it will take stock of the related issues like all other regions of the world, aware that beyond just ecological concerns, questions of development, energy, aid and financing are in reality grafted to the first. If climatic arenas are made up of opportunities, they are also moments of various frustrations for the African continent. This workshop therefore focuses on Africa's hopes and disillusion in international climate negotiations.

### Africa's Digitalization: Competition, Collaboration and Partnerships in a Geopolitical Context

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Hangwei Li (Germany) & Chanda Mfula (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores international strategies for digital cooperation with Africa and how African stakeholders perceive and respond to them amid geopolitical competition. Participants will examine Africa's digital partnerships, highlighting African agency and the pursuit of digital sovereignty.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the evolving landscape of digital cooperation between Africa and key international partners (e.g., the European Union, China, the United States, Turkey and India). As the digital economy increasingly shapes global interactions, it is essential to understand how digital infrastructure investments, data regulation & data protection, and standards influence African development. The panel will bring together diverse perspectives to unpack the dynamics of cooperation and competition in this space. Scholars of this panel will provide insights into the varying approaches and strategies of international partners regarding their digital engagement with Africa, covering areas such as digital infrastructure development, technology transfer, financing mechanisms, and regulatory frameworks. Ethical considerations and data protection standards will also be discussed. The panel will also highlight African perspectives, enhancing our understanding of African agency and national and regional strategies to harness the benefits of the digital transition while safeguarding data sovereignty. It will examine the continent's specific demands for digital cooperation, the criteria for evaluating external engagements, and perceptions of different international offers. Moreover, the panel aims to contribute to academic debates on African agency, more broadly, by assessing how African stakeholders navigate the competitive landscape of international digital cooperation. By incorporating these diverse viewpoints, the panel seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges inherent in Africa's digital transition and its partnerships with external actors.

### Africa's Inherited Borders and Identities: Citizenship and intra- and inter-Africa mobility

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Azeb Amha (the Netherlands) & Chika C. Mba (Ghana)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Colonisation and the creation of the current intra-continental borders fragmented socio-linguistic identities in Africa. The panel examines the prospects and challenges African ethno-linguistic alliances and identities generate and explores what decolonising African borders and identities might mean

#### ABSTRACT

Africans have complex identity matrices marked by numerous imposed historical events and processes, including colonisation and the current intra-continental borders. In some instances, imposed borders have meant that people from the same family and/or ethnic group suddenly found themselves in different countries, as was the case for the Nigeria-Benin, Togo-Benin, Ethiopia-Somalia, Somalia-Djibouti borders, amongst others. Colonialism not only ruptured the socio-economic dynamics of pre-colonial Africa but created new linguistic communities and identities: the so-called Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African domains, which shape the possibilities for migration for education and employment as well as the nature of social cooperation on the continent. While closing doors for many, this situation has opened pathways to Europe and North America for a handful of African social and political elites and their families, who increasingly embrace both these new identities and their diasporic connections with the homeland.

The proposed interdisciplinary panel will interrogate Africa's inherited borders and (new) identities and examine what it might mean to decolonise borders and identities in Africa, to contribute to discussions on pathways towards continental integration and autonomy, decreased conflict and socioeconomic advancement. Amongst other topics, papers might address:

- The role of borders in the formation and re-shaping of linguistic and cultural identities and alliances.
- Relationships between African borders and identities and intra- and inter-state collaborations and conflicts
- Chances and challenges for young Africans pursuing intra-continental mobility for higher education
- The role of post-independence geopolitics and national and international policy frameworks in shaping contemporary inter-African mobility and identity.

## African Interventions: Straddling Military and Non-Military Intervention Practices

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Christof Hartmann (Germany) & Cheryl Hendricks (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel will focus on non-military intervention practices of African regional organizations highlighting the variation of such practices across time and space, their intended or unintended effects, and the challenges in clearly defining the boundaries of military and non-military practices

### ABSTRACT

One key aspect of the multilayered African Peace and Security Architecture which emerged in the early 2000s was the full recognition of a variety of both military and non-military intervention instruments. Military activities of AU and the regional economic communities (RECs) attracted a considerable academic and political interest over the last 20 years, and empirical assessment of African peace and security dynamics has also mostly focused on tracing violent conflict dynamics. The strong interest in African military interventions has not been matched by a similar research interest in non-military intervention practices, although they represent the more important type of intervention through African organizations, occurring in a variety of empirical contexts, such as unconstitutional change of government, disputed elections, transitional justice or other types of political and humanitarian crisis.

The panel invites contributions providing a more fine-grained assessment of various non-military intervention practices using a variety of analytical approaches towards understanding the variation and dynamics of such practices across time and space, as well as their intended or unintended effects, and the challenges emerging from this research for established theoretical assumptions in the field of peace and conflict studies. We are also particularly interested in a better conceptual and empirical understanding of the interfaces between military and non-military instruments, as for example, multidimensional peace support operations combining coercive instruments with the implementation of developmental tasks or human rights monitoring

## African Jihadi groups: local, global and/or beyond?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Kristof Titeca (Belgium) & Vincent Foucher (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How can we get out of the binary that sees African Jihadi groups as either mere pawns of the global jihadi groups Al Qaeda and the Islamic State or as the unadulterated product of local grievances? This panel invites empirical and conceptual contributions which engage with this question.

### ABSTRACT

The ‘global-local’ debate on African Jihadi Groups centers on the ways in which African Jihadists are merely following a playbook from the higher level – the Islamic State or Al Qaeda – or whether the groups and their violence are the product of local grievances. This panel invites empirical or conceptual contributions which aim to unpack this debate, in order to go beyond the global/local binary.

On the one hand, more empirical evidence has become accessible on the nature and impact of these transnational and local connections. In doing so, we invite contributions on the trajectories, manifestations and belongings of these jihadi links, but also on their local or African forms of belonging and positioning.

On the other hand, on a conceptual level, there’s a wide array of notions outside of the field of jihadi studies that can help reconceptualize the questions at hand. To give a few examples, the research on how left-wing militants interacted with their international patrons in the 20th century, can be of use. Bayart’s “extraversion” concept, insisting on the way in which African social agents can draw on globally available material and ideological sources, put them to work in local contexts but also develop new “life styles” (Weber) is another possible example. In other words, by broadening the debate beyond Jihadi studies, insights from political science or area studies, but also geography – looking at the interconnected scales – can help enrich the debate. The panel therefore also invites new conceptual contributions on these questions.

## African Political Systems at a Crossroads: Populism, Coup D'états, and the Reinvention of Pan-Africanism in the 21st Century

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Hannah Muzee (Uganda) & Tata Emmanuel Sunjo (Cameroon)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel attempts to discuss the contemporary and growing political influences on the African continent evident in populism, coup d'etats, and Generation Z movements and how these present possibilities for a reinvention of the pan-Africanism ideology in the 21st Century and beyond.

### ABSTRACT

Many African political systems are currently at a crossroads, shaped by rising populist movements and a resurgence of coup d'états across the continent. While Pan-Africanism once served as a unifying force that inspired independence and regional cooperation, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has witnessed a growing disconnect between this ideology and the political realities younger generations face. Contemporary African governance still reflects colonial legacies, with a minimal infusion of African-centered values and realities, leading to disillusionment among populations, particularly Generation Z. These younger Africans, shaped by global interactions and the rise of populism, challenge the traditional political establishments while embracing a hybrid identity that blends both local and global influences. The resurgence of coups, as seen in countries like Mali, Guinea, and Sudan, further complicates the political landscape, raising questions about the effectiveness of Pan-African institutions and ideals in responding to these challenges. This panel explores the intersection of populism, coup d'états, and the evolving role of Pan-Africanism in addressing these complex political dynamics. Focusing on examples from Kenya, Uganda, and across Africa, it examines the extent to which these movements are influenced by global ideologies and the potential for reinventing Pan-Africanism to resonate with modern African youth. Ultimately, this study seeks to understand how the continent's current political crossroads may lead to new opportunities for unifying Africa under a redefined Pan-African framework.

## African Progress without Workers? Just Transition, Digital Turn, Free Trade, and Social Justice from a Labour Perspective

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Stefano Bellucci (the Netherlands) & Mark McQuinn (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

A theme of ECAS 2025 is African global positioning. Climate, digital, trade and justice are global issues of contentions in and about Africa. Strangely, the African workers' perspective seems historically absent from debates on such crucial issues. This panel investigates reasons and consequences.

### ABSTRACT

Various international organizations (including the ILO) identify four focal points for their African agendas: 1. Climate change with Africans being amongst those suffering the most from the global environmental crisis; 2. The digital transformation of economy and society; 3. Free trade and movement of capital with the formation of an African continental free trade area; 4. Inattention to social justice.

These issues are directly connected to African labour, but debates around them hardly involve the workers' perspective and the interests of African labour. Can solutions for climate change (just transition) consider Africans merely as clients of financial institutions? Can free trade agreements be implemented without labour provisions? Can the digital turn or revolution take place without any consideration of its consequences on employment, labour productivity and industrial relations? Doesn't social justice depend on how the labour factor figures in policies tackling these issues?

African trade unions and the labour movement in general do have a position on these global processes; yet they are largely absent from debates and negotiations. Is it because the voice of workers does not align with the interests of old and new powers, both economic and political? Or is it because African workers' organisations lack capacity or even the will to confront power?

This panel welcomes papers trying to answer these and other questions concerning four crucial global issues in relation to African labour. Studying Africa from a labour perspective is the first step towards liberation.

## African Sovereignty, Contentious Foreign Policy and ‘Undiplomatic’ practices

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** David Ambrosetti (France) & Léonard Colomba-Petteng (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of our panel is to identify and examine the diplomatic practices by which official representatives of African states contest the international order and seek to enact sovereignty towards their external environment.

### ABSTRACT

In recent years, accredited representatives and international organisations officials found themselves in the middle of intense diplomatic clashes in African contexts. The recent shift in geopolitical alliances in the Sahel area, for instance, has displayed dramatic cases, with top diplomats (foreign ambassadors, UN heads of mission, and even African Union top leaders) being denied visits, or declared persona non grata, or even expelled, sometimes manu militari. Similar cases occurred in 2021 in the midst of the war in Tigray, Ethiopia. In other instances, national authorities erect administrative impediments aimed at hindering foreign diplomats’ day-to-day activity. These few examples of diplomatic clashes were politically justified by competent authorities in the name of sovereignty in contexts of rapidly changing international partnerships. The purpose of our panel is to identify and examine the diplomatic practices by which official representatives of African states contest the international order and seek to enact sovereignty towards their external environment. Foreign diplomats find themselves on the front line, caught in this tug-of-war in their everyday interactions with the local governments. These interactions need to be better documented, as repertoires of action used to denounce, resist, or redefine international hierarchies (discursive practices, informal encounters, legal action, etc.). The panel welcomes and values papers with strong, original empirical material unraveling such diplomatic tensions, as well as analytical insights on their political and social contexts. At the theoretical level, the panel seeks to add to the “practice turn” in International Relations building on overlooked African case studies.



### Afropean Politics: Representation and Participation in the Context of European Multiculturalism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Noah Echa Attah (Lesotho) & Azeez Olaniyan (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel examines the complexity of Afropeans within European political spaces, which is becoming important in political involvement and representation in Europe, particularly how their distinct identities shape and are shaped by European multiculturalism and political structures.

#### ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, multiculturalism in Europe has changed substantially, raising the visibility of African diasporas in a variety of fields, including politics. Despite this, Afropean politics, a term blending African and European identities and politics, remains limited. The expanding multiculturalism makes the presence and impact of Afropeans in European political spaces critical to modern political participation. Understanding the complexity of Afropeans within European political spheres, particularly how their distinct identities shape and are shaped by European multiculturalism and political structures is essential to comprehending political involvement and representation in Europe. This panel explores the dynamics of Afropean politics, focussing on the representation and participation of African diasporas within European political systems. Specifically, the panel is interested in the evolution of African diasporas in Europe and their historical political engagement; theories and models of political representation and their application to minority groups; mechanisms of political participation and their accessibility to Afropeans; and case studies/comparative analysis of Afropean representation and participation in different European countries. The panel will contribute to the broader discourse on multiculturalism and political engagement, offering insights into the intersection of identity, politics, and governance in a diverse Europe.

## AI in Eastern Africa: Encounters, Innovations, Resistances

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Sharath Srinivasan (United Kingdom) & George Karekwaivanane (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will explore complex trajectories of AI in eastern Africa, advancing research into the impacts of AI within experiences, identities and belongings in the region. Papers will consider multiple disciplinary perspectives to gain a fuller picture of how AI is produced, imagined and lived.

### ABSTRACT

Globally, the hype around AI in late 2022 with the public release of ChatGPT has given way to AI's increasing integration into everyday discourses, imaginaries and practices, including art, politics, work and knowledge production. It has become the latest in digital innovations that capture how we imagine the best and worst of humanity: from AI imagined as a solution to address health and humanitarian crises, to posing an existential risk to what it means to be human and ways of being. This panel will focus on the complex trajectories of AI within eastern Africa, in order to interrogate AI's impacts within lived realities in the region. Papers will consider: How is AI imagined and experienced within sociopolitical, physical and economic geographies of eastern Africa? Which technologies are being developed, used and experimented with in the region? What relations of power and dependency are being realised through the introduction and promotion of AI, and how is AI being resisted? What new forms of identity, belonging and division are emerging through human interactions with AI in everyday life? Who and what sits outside of this 'AI revolution'? This panel encourages papers to consider AI in eastern Africa from multiple disciplinary perspectives in order to bring a complex, grounded and holistic picture of how AI is being produced, imagined and lived within and from Africa. With this, the panel will create space to consider imaginaries and impacts of AI on their own terms, contributing to challenging power inequalities in knowledge production about AI.

### Contesting “justice” in African responses to climate change

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Ruth Bookbinder (United Kingdom) & Alexander Beresford (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores demands for justice in African responses to the climate crisis and what a "just" transition would look like on the continent. The panel considers African agency in these transitions from the position of policy makers and the communities most affected by climate change.

#### ABSTRACT

Political ecology – the relationship between politics, political economy, ecology and its results – is an increasingly relevant analytical framework as the impacts of climate change manifest themselves. Climate change is likely to disproportionately affect African countries despite the continent being among the least responsible for the climate crisis and is already exacerbating existing patterns of inequality. “Just transitions” are framed as a solution to tackling the climate crisis and the related inequality. However, the term is also increasingly applied to measures that do not represent a significant change to the *status quo*. Indeed, efforts to address the crisis risk creating new networks of dependency through loan agreements that finance energy transitions, as well as the reliance on imported technologies from outside the continent. Climate action policies also potentially aggravate social crises at the local level where industries are forced to close, land is dispossessed, and/or communities are displaced.

To explore these issues, this panel invites proposals that examine the operationalisation of “just transition” in Africa and the political challenges this is generating. We will explore how African actors assert agency in climate action, as well as the local, national and global inequalities of power that impact this. Drawing on Miranda Fricker’s work on epistemic injustice, we invite papers that explore African agency in struggles for justice-in-transition, whether that be policy makers at the frontline of climate action or the communities who are most affected by it.

### Democracy and Militarization in Twenty First Century Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Michael Nwankpa (United Kingdom) & Georgette Arielle Djoufan Fotsing (Cameroon)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Africa has witnessed a resurgence in direct military intervention. This panel engages with the general trend of militarization and democratic transformation in Africa since 2000.

#### ABSTRACT

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s led to the democratization of many African states. By the turn of the century, democratic regimes in Africa, although flawed and authoritarian in many cases, had become quite prevalent. However, in the last decade, Africa has witnessed a resurgence in direct military intervention (through coup de' tat). Although the re-militarization of African democracies through direct military interference in African politics is quite worrisome, the militarization of African democracies extends beyond coup. It is 'shaped by the confluence of global and local actors, norms, ideologies and technologies.' This panel provides a critical insight into the dynamic interaction between democratic transformation and militarization in the African continent. It analyses the critical factors (geopolitics, securitization of underdevelopment and poverty, climate change) and actors (military, insurgents, private armies/mercenaries, African elites, foreign super and middle powers, multilateral organisations, international development agencies and NGOs) that have contributed and are contributing to militarization and the regression in the growth and consolidation of democracy in Africa. The panel will respond to the following specific questions:

- What are the driving factors behind the militarization in 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa?
- Is there any link between contemporary militarization in Africa and the adoption (or utility) of liberal democracy in the continent? And
- What is the prospect of achieving democratic growth in Africa or an African-styled democracy?

### Democratic politics and security provision in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** **Eloise Bertrand** (United Kingdom) & **Samiratou Dipama** (Burkina Faso)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We are inviting papers discussing the interplay between the politics of democracy and security provision in Africa, looking at how the post-democratisation political dynamics have shaped security policies, and how in turn security crises reshape how democracy works and is perceived.

#### ABSTRACT

Democracy has been an omnipresent yet contested political concept across the African continent since the turn of the century, when political transitions brought forward new institutions, modes of contestations, and political settlements. Meanwhile, the continent has faced significant security challenges, including political conflict and election-related violence, militant Islamist armed insurgencies, banditry, and civil wars. These two sets of dynamics are closely intertwined, as governance issues are often among the root causes of the violence, while security challenges can derail democratic consolidation. This has led some scholars to ask whether democracy and insecurity are compatible (Saidou 2024), and fed broader questions about the nature of democracy and security and the way these concepts are perceived and redefined by African scholars, elites, and citizens.

We are inviting paper proposals discussing the interplay between the politics of democracy (understood broadly) and security provision across the continent. We are interested in both how the norms, institutions, and bargains that have emerged out of the democratic transition and their contestation have influenced states' responses to security crises in recent times, and in how security crises have in turn contributed to reshaping how democracy works (or not) and how it is perceived across the continent. We welcome contributions from a broad range of epistemic and methodological traditions, and we particularly value papers demonstrating collaborative and innovative approaches.

## Digital platforms and armed insecurity in African crisis ecologies

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Adam Sandor (Germany) & Lamine Savané (Mali)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Digital platforms are multiplying and deepening people's engagement in contexts of armed insecurity far from the physical locales where such violence is perpetuated. The panel examines how entanglements of the digital with situations of violent insecurity are studied, understood, and politicized.

### ABSTRACT

The heterogeneity of digital content and information, truth claims, beliefs, and political and ideological positions seems to have brought about, paradoxically, a hardening of sociopolitical boundaries. Tendencies of polarization between “us” and “them”—however defined—increasingly inform conflict across the globe, which works to reduce politics to concerns of in/security and the fight against an enemy (Mbembe 2016). In this panel, we seek to explore the role of digital technologies, and especially of social media, in shaping contemporary conflict, warfare, insecurities, and the study thereof. What does it mean when war is so participatory that anyone with “a mobile phone and a few followers” can technically partake in it (Vogel & Musamba 2024:1403)? How do contests over truth and meaning attract belligerents across diverse geographical spaces? How is social media used differently by state and non-state actors, and how do they strategically use technologies to sustain or subvert existing social and political hierarchies? What are the ethical, methodological, and analytical potentials and challenges for researchers interested in the entanglements of online and offline dynamics in specific situations of armed conflict, insurgency, and counter-insurgency? The panel engages, therefore, with both epistemological and methodological questions, as well as ontological ones regarding how digital means and platforms shape conflict dynamics, amplify certain voices, positions, and ideologies over others, and bring armed insecurity and conflict to locales far from the literal battlefield.

## Dynamics of African Sports Migration

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** **Stephanie Rudwick** (Czech Republic) & **Jakub Vávrovský** (Czech Republic)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines the multiple influences African sports migration has on both African and European societies while paying close attention to global and local race and migration politics.

### ABSTRACT

This panel focuses on the study of African professional athletes and players who emigrate to Europe from the continent and the multiple influences and impacts it has on European and African sport. Situated against scholarship in the social and political sciences, migration studies, transnationalism, and critical race studies, we aim to provide some useful paradigms for broadly analysing African sports labour migration. Concrete national specificities, local languages and national culture influence the situation of African individuals in European sport and need to be considered. This panel, in particular, explores racialisation and racism experienced by sportsmen and sportswomen of African descent while questioning the order established by white men that has been successfully operating in European sport since the beginning. Fan behaviour, in particular in European soccer, overt and covert forms of racial abuse, as well as the impacts of BLM on African sports migration are discussed. The relation of African sports professionals with families on the home continent, commitments to their country and responsibilities linked to this are further considered. We also examine issues of exploitation and human rights, as well as the problem of the 'brain-drain' from the continent. The sustainability of migration and considerations of long-term implications for both African sports and European clubs shall be discussed from socio-historical, cultural or political perspectives. We particularly invite contributions which focus on ethnographic fieldwork, but other qualitative or quantitative work is also welcome.

## Embracing Incompleteness: Building a Politics of Virtue in Africa and its Diaspora

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** **Andreas Mehler** (Germany) & **Francis Nyamnjoh** (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines recent African and diasporic efforts to create inclusive spaces and practices of conviviality amidst the complexities of “incompleteness.”

### ABSTRACT

Francis Nyamnjoh’s concept of the “Frontier African” highlights the contestation of fixed identities and boundaries. However, the frontier is also a space of uncertainty and potential violence. This panel explores how political engagements can transform the virtues of “incompleteness” — mobility, encounters (invention, mutual curiosity), indebtedness, compositeness and conviviality, — into inclusive realities. We seek papers with a strong philosophical foundation and empirical evidence, examining examples such as recent constitutional reforms, diaspora-led initiatives, and innovative approaches beyond containers of ethnicity. We invite contributions that bridge philosophical and empirical perspectives, demonstrating how the concept of “incompleteness” can inform and inspire concrete political actions that foster a politics of virtue.

### Call for Papers:

We invite papers that explore the following questions:

How can the concept of “incompleteness” help us understand and navigate the complexities of contemporary African and diasporic political landscapes?

What are some concrete examples of political engagements that embody the virtues of “incompleteness”?

How can we build a “politics of virtue” that embraces inclusivity, participation, and conviviality amidst the challenges of uncertainty and change?

We particularly welcome papers that:

Bridge philosophical and empirical perspectives.

Draw on case studies from Africa and its diaspora.

Offer innovative theoretical and practical insights into the relationship between “incompleteness” and political action.



## Emergence of a transcontinental political consciousness or e-populism? The Digital Activism of Africans and Afrodescendants

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Jacques Ngimbous (United States) & Prisca Assié (Cameroon)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram promote a common political and cultural identity among Africans and Afrodescendants, demonstrating against neo-colonialism and neo-domination. Further investigation is needed to assess legitimacy and digitalization impact.

### ABSTRACT

Since their advent, social media have opened up new battlefields for the affirmation of a political and cultural identity that is supposedly common to Africans and Afrodescendants. On digital platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, African, Afropolitan, and Afropean activists appear to transcend their differences in order to defend what they claim to have in common: Africa. However, most notably, it is a political demonstration against "neo-colonialism" or "neo-domination." These protest initiatives are worthy of study for two reasons: firstly, they are transcontinental in nature; secondly, they are intangible.

This observation allows us to identify three potential avenues for further inquiry. The first line of inquiry is to assess the legitimacy of Afro-descendant activists in speaking on behalf of the African cause. What personal histories, intellectual traditions, and social contexts inspire this reappropriation of Africa and its struggles? A second line of research would be to distinguish between a potential collective political awakening, facilitated by social networks, and a form of Africanist populism that lacks long-term viability. A third line of inquiry would be to examine the impact of digitalization on the formation of a collective African and Afro-descendant identity in Africa and its diaspora. While it is not yet clear whether digital activism will ultimately result in the formation of a common African and Afro-descendant identity or whether it will merely be a passing fad, it is evident that it is already exerting a significant influence.

## Entangled memories of mobility, violence and solidarity on migration routes from Africa to Europe

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Rachel Ibreck (United Kingdom) & Fatma Raach (Tunisia)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel focuses on the memories and traces of migration on routes from Africa to Europe; and on the power relations, social identities and cultural practices they reveal and produce. It reflects upon an 'interweaving of worlds' through mobility.

### ABSTRACT

This panel focuses on the memories and traces of migration on routes from Africa to Europe; and on the power relations, social identities and cultural practices they reveal and produce. It reflects upon an 'interweaving of worlds' (Mbembe 2007) through mobility – an Afropolitanism arising in struggles for movement at the margins. It considers how memories of mobility, violence and solidarity are expressed and shared in diverse forms among migrants, and between them and people they encounter, including commemorations, collective action, activist practice, legal processes, art and music. It questions how the political economy of capitalism, and transnational regimes of border violence, inequality and racism, are reflected in the memories and traces of migration; and in turn how these contribute to either a sense of shared identity and belonging, or to fraught contestations over memory and heritage. In contexts where political discourse and migration governance policies impact on conceptions of 'migrants' racializing, excluding and rendering them invisible and subject to violence, this panel turns to memory and public heritage to discover social ties and interactions that cross borders within Africa and across the Mediterranean. It explores how memories and traces of migration manifest, or are erased, in heterogeneous public and private spaces, including cities, rural spaces, borderlands, maritime zones, and in the differences or continuities between these. It welcomes ethnographic and comparative approaches – including case studies in either African or European countries, especially Mediterranean countries – as well as more conceptual reflections on entangled memories of migration.

## EU – Africa relations. Beyond the rhetoric of the “partnership of the equal”

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Andrzej Polus (Poland) & Monika Różalska (Poland)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

‘Partnership of equals’ has become a mantra in the EU rhetoric towards Africa. The panel aims to present case studies on the practices of the European Union’s relations with African countries and the African Union, focusing on African agency and moving beyond simplistic binaries.

### ABSTRACT

The European Union's relations with African states and the African Union are presented and understood through binary oppositions: developed – developing, grantor – grantee, stable - unstable, etc. Such binary framings tend to oversimplify the complexities of the relationship, failing to capture the nuances and multifaceted interactions between the two regions. While recently, the rhetoric of Africa as a “sister continent” to Europe and the notion of a “partnership of equals” has become the new mantra in European Commission statements. Therefore, during the panel, we aim to go beyond these binaries and identify African understandings of relations with Europe, acknowledging the role of African agency in shaping these interactions. By focusing on how African actors actively influence and redefine the relationship, we can highlight both new elements and continuities in the EU's approach to Africa. This approach shifts the focus from passive reception to active participation and brings attention to the evolving dynamics that characterize these engagements. The main objective of the panel is to critically analyse the state of the EU's relationship with the African continent and contrast the official rhetoric with the practice of the relationship. This analysis aims to shed light on discrepancies between policy discourse and real-world interactions, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the partnership.

The panel invites researchers wishing to present their findings on both the critical analysis of the EU policy towards Africa and those presenting the African perspectives. The panel welcomes theoretical papers and case studies.

### Exploring geocultural power in African international relations

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Bizusew Mersha Ashagrie (Sweden) & Yohannes Tekalign Beza (Ethiopia)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the concept of ‘geocultural power’ in African international relations by focusing on how African actors mobilize historical and cultural narratives to shape transnational relationships.

#### ABSTRACT

Africa has, once again, become an important site of geopolitical competition. Global powers like the US, China, and Russia, as well as emerging powers such as Turkey and the Gulf states are locked in intense competition to forge economic, political and social ties with African countries. Notably, states like China and Turkey are also leveraging civilizational narratives and historical ties to redefine their relationships with African countries. The way in which such narratives are mobilized strategically to shape transnational spaces of cooperation, and to project power, has already received some attention in International Relations. For example, Tim Winter (2019) has coined the concept of ‘geocultural power’ to highlight how global actors invoke different aspects of (a shared) culture, religion, heritage, and history to forge or strengthen relationships with other states, and to legitimize expansionist ambitions. These are factors that are often overlooked in more traditional geopolitical and geoeconomic explanations of African international relations. But, like the latter, existing studies of geocultural power have often portrayed Africa and Africans as passive observers, or mere recipients of the narratives and visions of more powerful states.

This panel aims to challenge this perspective by exploring how African actors, too, invoke (shared) historical and cultural narratives to shape and justify their political, economic and social relations across different transnational spaces. We thus invite papers that explore – empirically and/or conceptually – how African actors mobilize, negotiate and justify geocultural narratives to create or redefine international/transnational relationships, both within Africa and beyond.

### Exploring the current forms of Populist Strategies in African Governance Systems

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Fredrick Kisekka-Ntale (Uganda) & Christian Kakuba (Uganda)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel reflects on the cultural and political areas of convergence relating to the trajectory of populism in Africa, asking about situations in which citizens find themselves and how they navigate them.

#### ABSTRACT

The study of populism in global politics has re-emerged as one of the key areas of scholarship in the African space. In this new inquest, we have anxiety in ascertaining the various forms that populism takes in the context of the African continent today. We define populist strategies to constitute modes of political mobilization and expression driven by anti-elitist policy conversations aimed at correcting the exclusion of economically marginalized constituencies. These discourses are traditionally espoused by charismatic party leadership who profess affinity with the under-class or a 'closeness with the down-trodden in many of the African spaces. In this panel, we contend that populism is a response to the African States' failure to build successful neo-liberal democratic systems. For example, in Uganda, the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) frequently articulates the liberation narrative of 1986 as a way to connect with the largely youthful population (*Bazukulu*) with the country's troubled past to legitimize the couch political realities. In the same way the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and ZANU-PF, in South African and Zimbabwe respectively ride on the landed re-distribution agenda. While the current forms of populism are distinctive in their own right, it is important to debate them in relation to the interaction with neo-liberalism and wider reiteration of national liberation agendas of the century. This panel will reflect on the cultural and political areas of convergence relating to the trajectory of populism in Africa, asking about situations in which citizens find themselves and how they navigate them.

## From green to smart: the politics of labelling the sustainable city

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Rozenn Nakanabo Diallo (France) & Sina Schlimmer (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Africa's rapid urbanization and climate change have become key concerns of the international development community. This panel assesses the transnational character of urban policy making, by focusing on the making of the "green city" label and its negotiated national and local implementation.

### ABSTRACT

Since the 1987 Brundtland Report established the concept of "sustainable urban development", development and conservation agencies, municipalities, civil society organisations and the private sector, have contributed to creating normative narratives about urbanization and labels for African cities, which circulate internationally: "green-", "new-" or even "smart-" city projects are presented as solutions towards achieving the overarching goal of sustainable urban development. At the same time, these new paradigms propose strategies for greening urban policies. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties on Biological Diversity (COP 22) in 2016 stressed the integration of the "green city" paradigm into the global nature conservation policy agenda.

"Green" urban expertise is increasingly built up from the Global South. A whole range of actors and organisations have become co-producers of the international agenda for the "renaturation" of cities, notably through their involvement in transnational city networks, where they develop policy standards and instruments. These are often in resonance and sometimes at odds with international organizations involved in these issues.

This panel will assess the transnational, multilevel and hybrid character of urban policy making, by focusing on the circulation and appropriation of the "green city" label. How do norms related to green cities circulate at international fora and knowledge sharing? How do decision-makers, municipal and civil society actors at different levels translate them into national and local policies? What do these labels mean locally and to what extent are they used to feed into local politics, while at the same time contributing to international policy-making?

## Grassroots approaches to unarmed civilian protection: community self-protection, local agency and culturally-embedded practices

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Gordon Crawford (United Kingdom) & Zainab Mai-Bornu (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel discusses unarmed civilian protection in conflict-affected contexts. It focuses on innovative protective measures taken by local civilians to protect their communities. It explores key lessons and how civilian-led approaches can be expanded across various African conflict contexts.

### ABSTRACT

As intra-state conflicts continue to proliferate in many countries in Africa, the need for attention to civilian protection is evident from the astonishingly high proportion of civilian casualties, reported to be 90% of war-related casualties (United Nations Security Council 2022). The concept of unarmed civilian protection (UCP) emerged as a nonviolent alternative to the traditional protection of civilians by armed peacekeepers and marked a paradigmatic shift from the dominant militarised notion of civilian protection. Nonetheless UCP has remained characterised by implementation predominantly by groups “from outside the communities affected by the conflict or even from overseas” (Molz 2018: 14), most notably international NGOs. Yet, conflict-affected communities are not mere victims waiting for external intervention, and nonviolent protective measures have long been taken at the grassroots level, but with limited scholarly attention. Hence, in line with the conference focus on challenging ways of thinking about African realities, this panel will look at examples of unarmed community self-protection where the agency, creativity and culturally-embedded practices of conflict-affected civilians themselves are highlighted. Papers are invited which examine nonviolent community self-protection in various conflict contexts. Such contexts could include: civil wars and secessionist conflict; localised forms of violence such as Jihadism and farmer-herder conflicts; and state violence against social protests. The roles played by women, young people and traditional leaders are of particular importance. Papers are encouraged which use arts-based and creative methods to capture the experiences of community-based activists. The link with nonviolent resistance will also be explored.

## Green transformations in Africa: a new political arena for elites

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Climate Change

**ORGANISERS:** Camille Popineau (France) & Jeremy Allouche (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will focus on the effects of the green transformation in the reconfiguration of African elites. It will see how the fundamental structural changes in the African political economy are driving various forms of conflicts and the establishment of a new political area.

### ABSTRACT

Like in many other continents, the concept of green transformation is affecting the African landscape. The 'environmental imperative', the existence of an international consensus on the need to protect the environment, is having multiple effects in terms of actor's networks and coalitions and local livelihoods. The concept of green diplomacy has been recently emerging but in current debates, the type and role of local, national and global elites is not well theorised. This under-theorisation is surprising given the fact that this green transformation leads to fundamental structural changes in the African political economy. Are we seeing a reproduction of the same elites despite the green transformation? What types of elites coalitions are developing? How does the elites and the state adjust to this transformation in terms of rent-seeking? The objective of this panel is to unpack the role of elites in African green transformation and proposes to analyze the effects of this green shift on African political economies. In doing so, the panel aims to understand how green transformation creates new forms of conflicts that also brings a new layer in elite configurations and dynamics, and conversely how these power dynamics between elites allows us to better understand green transformation policies. Overall, it aims to understand this new political arena, a space of competition and struggle where different social groups and institutions confront each other, and where different scales (local, national, international) are articulated.



### Human security, democracy, governance and development: The African perspective

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Dorcas Ettang (South Africa) & Danjuma Jise (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks to pool together presenters whose focal areas deal with and engage multiple African realities, entanglements, complex trajectories, constructions, expressions, and performances of Africa on the nexus between human security, democracy and leadership.

#### ABSTRACT

The intersection between democracy, human security and leadership reveals fundamental tensions in African academic and policy discourses. This is largely because of the tenuous, stymied and sometimes confusing conditions it embeds and intricate value ascriptions often ensconced in assessments of sustainable human progress. For many developing countries in Africa, despite the integrity of the aphoristic connection between democracy and human security, situated experiences expose several paradoxes that weaken the foundation of the received wisdom and expose considerable lacunae in conventional modes of analysis. Our panel bids to tweak around the discursive lens to stimulate new modes of analysis and understanding of how democracy/governance, human security and development have fared against the backdrop of Afropeanism, Afropolitanism and Africa. It will do this by interrogating the praxis of democracy and human security in the context of governance and leadership in Africa and applying intersectionality to illustrate specific challenges in fostering national and regional stability/sustainable development in the region. From this subject position, a compelling case is thus made for genuine commitments to recalibrate the fundamental axioms of democracy and good governance in sensitive and responsive ways to the nation's subjectivities. For democracy to be meaningful, it should be adaptive and accommodative of the complex interplay between leadership and human security. However, while the causal relationship is fairly stable in the extant literature, there will always be renascent challenges that must be encountered through refreshed dialogic engagements.

## China and/in fragile and conflict situations in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Abdul-Gafar Oshodi (Nigeria) & Basile Ndjio (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

China's presence in conflict-affected and fragile situations in Africa is less known. Beyond peacekeeping, our panel invites discussion on Chinese arms trade, architecture, infrastructure, and renewable energy in conflict-affected and fragile states in Africa in historical and contemporary contexts.

### ABSTRACT

China's relationship with Africa has expanded in a multidimensional manner, ranging from becoming the continent's largest trading partner, a major source of development finance, to becoming a top destination for African students ahead of the United States and countries in Europe, except France. Thus, Chinese growing relationship with and presence in Africa has generated significant academic and popular interests that have ranged from Sino-optimism to Sino-pessimism. However, while there have been enormous academic interests, little focus has been made on China in conflict situations. Indeed, most of the available works on this subject have focused on Chinese involvement in peacekeeping in Africa. Yet, conflict and state fragility in Africa have affected Chinese interests and citizens. How are Chinese state and non-state actors navigating this situation in the African context? How valid is the risk-taking argument in China's relations with conflict and fragile states under Xi Jinping – and how do this compare with earlier eras? What are the drivers of Chinese interests in conflict-affected and fragile states in Africa? These questions are of interest in this panel. The panel is also interested in papers that, for instance, discuss Chinese involvement in arms trade, architecture, infrastructure, and renewable energy in conflict-affected and fragile states in Africa. Generally, empirical and theoretical papers that analyse the situation in a single case or comparative studies in Africa are invited. This could be in historical or contemporary context.

### Implementing African Peace Agreements

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Michael Aeby (Switzerland) & Kathryn Nash (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel contributes to the research on African peacemaking and builds on peace research on agreement implementation. It aims to present original comparative and case study research on the strategies that African peacemakers deploy to render peace agreements more sustainable.

#### ABSTRACT

African peacemakers have facilitated numerous peace agreements in violent conflicts since the African Union commenced the construction of the African Peace and Security Architecture under the mantra of ‘African Solutions to African Problems’. Since 2002, more than 290 peace accords were concluded in Africa, including cease-fires, partial accords, and comprehensive peace agreements that were sponsored by the AU and Regional Economic Communities (Coe & Nash 2020; PA-X 2024). However, more than half the agreements which the APSA building blocks facilitated between 2016 and 2020 collapsed within a year. (IPSS 2020; 2022). Whereas accords often collapse for reasons that are beyond the control of their external sponsors, African peacemakers have continuously innovated and tested strategies to render agreements more durable and better the chances that the accords translate into lasting peace. These strategies may relate to the design of agreement provisions to facilitate and enforce the implementation of transitional mechanisms ranging from power-sharing to transitional justice (Molloy & Bell 2019). The African guarantors of agreements have sought to translate written third-party guarantees into actions during transitions by continuing to mediate dialogue among signatories, arbitrating in implementation disputes, and sanctioning agreement violations. (Aeby 2022; Nathan 2022). The search for better implementation strategies includes the sequencing and decentralisation of implementation tasks to prevent deadlocks (Ramsbotham 2022). The panel aims to present novel comparative and case study research on these and other strategies, which African peacemakers deploy to render painstakingly negotiated agreements durable and enable transitions to sustainable peace.

## Indian Ocean Commission and diverse responses of its members to security challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Ajay Dubey (India) & Chandani Tiwari (India)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will focus on the diverse responses to security challenges and conflict resolution in the western Indian region especially IOC member states due to larger conflict emerging in the Indo-Pacific region.

### ABSTRACT

The Union of the Comoros, France (Reunion), Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles are the five member states that make up the diverse intergovernmental Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). It is the only all-island regional organization in all of Africa. These islands are particularly sensitive to security issues, including those related to health, the marine industry, food security, climate change, even with their sizable exclusive economic zones. Some issues are orientated towards Africa, some are aligned with India, and some are predominantly focused on France. Hence, the presence of the Diasporas, as micro island state, presence of France as a member, entrance of Major powers like China and growing rivalry with Quad members, smaller economy- all throws different objectives and strategies that member countries must pursue. The growing severity of security risks is serious and neglecting them could lead to a catastrophe that may impact the political economy of Western Indian Ocean islands. The Indian Ocean trades passing through them serves as a crucial conduit for global trade, with over 80% of the world's energy traffic transiting through the region. This panel would intend to examine how littoral states in the region are engrossed in a geopolitical struggle for dominance, throwing growing risks to IOC members countries. The panel seeks to investigate, in a comparative perspective, security concerns of the members states of IOC.

## Integrating the African Peace and Security Architecture: Links and Disconnects

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Jamie Pring (Switzerland) & Emma Birikorang (Ghana)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks to think APSA integration differently, not as result of regulating formal institutional relationships, but as dynamic alignment (or disconnect) between a whole range of interests, relationships, and practices that assemble the regional governance of peace and security in Africa.

### ABSTRACT

Research on building and integrating the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has so far mainly focused on formal institutional gaps and linkages. This has resulted in more efforts that aim to codify and strengthen the relationships among offices within the AU and between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities, for instance in terms of references, protocols, and memoranda of understanding. This panel seeks to think APSA integration differently, not as result of regulating formal institutional relationships, but as dynamic alignment (or disconnect) between a whole range of interests, relationships, and practices that together assemble the governance of peace and security on the continent. To this end, the panel reflects on the state of examining APSA integration and fragmentation and explores alternative dimensions beyond formal institutional linkages. We invite innovative papers focusing for instance on the role of national, local, and grass-roots entities (offices, informal groups, traditional authorities, community-based responses) in the APSA and their (dis-)connections with the AU and RECs Headquarters; on epistemic communities and their role in knowledge production about APSA integration and fragmentation; on competing normative commitments and visions for APSA; on the effects of societal protest and backlash for APSA; as well as on innovative conceptual approaches to imagining and analyzing APSA integration and disconnects.

*Our panel is sponsored by the Aegis CGR "African Politics and International Relations".*

## Knowing violent extremism in Africa: The politics of uncertainty and anticipation

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Antonia Witt (Germany) & Linnéa Gelot (Sweden)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the politics of (un)certainty around violent extremism in Africa, inviting contributions from various disciplinary backgrounds that engage with the formation and effects of a highly uncertain field of governance.

### ABSTRACT

Preventing and combatting violent extremism is becoming a central field of governance in Africa, involving a whole range of state and non-state actors both from within and outside of the continent. It is also a fecund area of Afropean relations, shaped by European (in)securities and resulting policies of intervention as well as conflict dynamics and actors in specific African territories. Yet making violent extremism governable is deeply shaped by uncertainty. How to identify violent extremists? Who determines what constitutes a violent extremist activity? And how to 'prevent', 'combat' and 'rehabilitate' it? Governing violent extremism involves the assessment of risks, sometimes lacking profound empirical data, assumptions and anticipations of future events, and the drawing out of generalizations from particular experiences. This panel explores the politics of (un)certainty around violent extremism in Africa, inviting contributions from various disciplinary backgrounds that engage with the formation and effects of a highly uncertain field of governance. We invite empirically grounded contributions exploring inter alia how different actors produce, navigate, and contest (un)certainty in engaging with 'violent extremism'; the role of European-African relations in making violent extremism known; as well as the localized effects of the combined presence and uncertainty of violent extremism for different societies and individuals.

## Navigating Passport Politics: Visa Encounters of Global Academics for Conference Travel

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Aboabea Akuffo (United Kingdom) & Pear Puwurayire (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines how passport politics affect visa experiences for academics attending short-term conferences. We invite submissions documenting personal visa challenges and exploring how passport hierarchies shape academic mobility and access to global knowledge through an auto-ethnographic lens

### ABSTRACT

This panel revisits ongoing debates surrounding passport politics and examines how they intersect with the visa application experiences of academics. The focus is on visa encounters for short-term stays to attend academic conferences, considering the diverse challenges faced by scholars from both the Global South and Global North.

We invite submissions that document different experiences from researchers who require visas under different circumstances or not at all. The visa application processes, though varying across countries, often involve rigorous documentation requirements, including invitation letters, proof of academic standing, and financial solvency.

While recommendations for short-term stay visas range from fee exemptions (as seen in European Parliament and the Council directive 2005/761/EC) to specific visa types like Standard Visitor Visas or Temporary Resident Visas, the reality of obtaining these visas can differ greatly based on nationality and passport strength.

The panel encourages contributions addressing the following:

- Personal experiences of visa application: Were there feelings of contentment or distress? Were you able to attend and present at the conference as a presenter, convener, organizer, author, or co-author?
- How passport politics affected your visa application experience, particularly in terms of delays, denials, or additional scrutiny based on your nationality.

Through this panel we aim to explore how passport hierarchies shape academic mobility and limit equitable access to global knowledge production. Using auto-ethnography, scholars will center their personal experiences as both the subject and knower to reflect on broader structural issues, challenging traditional notions of researcher detachment.

### Political identity and foreign policy in Africa: exploring critical junctures

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** John Clark (United States) & Katharina Newbery (Ethiopia)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how political elites in Africa formulate new regime identities during critical junctures in their country's history. It then asks: how do these new identities enable shifts in foreign policy, and in notions of belonging to transnational spaces within and beyond the continent?

#### ABSTRACT

Recent research on the foreign policies of African elites posits that the ways in which these elites construct specific regime or state identities shapes how they position themselves in the world, and how they engage with relevant 'others' (Black and Hornsby 2017; Clark 2024; Newbery 2021). In this panel we seek to move this field of inquiry further by exploring, in more empirical detail, if and how changes in regime identity are linked to changes in foreign policy, and how this works in practice.

Changes in regime identity may be caused by successful insurgencies (as in Rwanda and Uganda), coups d'état (as in countries of the Sahel), or when personalist leaders undermine existing party-oriented identities (as in post-2018 Ethiopia). In the anti-colonial and Cold War eras, revolutions also produced such identity changes and foreign policy re-orientations. By focusing on these critical junctures, when regime identities and foreign policies are contested, reformulated or renegotiated, we hope to develop a better understanding of how (new) political elites in Africa have narrated different forms of belonging – e.g., as part of a region, the continent, in relation to specific neighbours, other parts of the world or 'great powers' – and have formulated new foreign policies in this context.

The panel is open to papers that explore cases from across the continent. They may focus on historical or contemporary developments. We are open to papers that use different methodologies/methods to study the articulation of, and connection between, political identities and foreign policies in Africa.



### Politics and art in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Julia Gallagher (United Kingdom) & Sechaba Maape (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary panel explores how politics is expressed by and read into the arts in Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this interdisciplinary panel is to explore how politics can be expressed by and read into the arts in Africa. We define ‘arts’ to include imaginative works that are visual, literary, musical, architectural or performative. We define ‘politics’ to encompass ideas about and challenges to structures of power, forms of social organisation and identity, and the distribution of resources.

We’re interested in papers that explore the possibilities offered by art works for exploring political themes in new ways, and how explorations might be achieved by those who produce art and those who consume it. We welcome work that makes theoretical innovations and/or new empirical contributions drawn from local, regional or trans-continental African ideas and experiences.

Papers might address questions such as:

- How do the arts reclaim, reimagine or reproduce African identities?
- Can art explore political themes that are difficult or dangerous to confront more directly?
- How does the marketisation of art affect its political content?
- Can the arts contribute to processes of decolonisation?
- Who defines and controls aesthetic standards?
- What are arts’ limits in making political interventions?
- What are the differences between propaganda, didacticism and activism in art?
- What is pan-African art?

### Protesting Africa: Causes, Strategies, Actors and Consequences [CRG African Politics and International Relations]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Martin Schmiedl (Czech Republic) & Alberto Liyo (Czech Republic)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the current protests across Africa. It considers how protesters use a diversity of strategies and tools, what took them to the streets and what deeper consequences the current protest wave brings to African politics.

#### ABSTRACT

Recently, protests have been a huge rise across the continent. We have witnessed anti-authoritarian protests in Burkina Faso and Angola, protests concerning bad governance or economic reforms often in connection with international finance institutions like #Occupy and #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria or very recent #RejectFinanceBill2024 (later #RutoMustGo) protests in Kenya. One thing protests seem to have in common, it is the younger online-organised and neglected generation who steps in showing dissatisfaction not just with the socio-economic situation but also with the current political elite. Does this signal a deeper change in African politics? Is there a new kind of issue-focused political activism?

Currently, we speak about the Third or even Fourth wave of protests (Mueller, 2018; Rodrigues Sanches, 2022). The current scholarship highlights the relevance of social media mobilization (Mateos and Erro, 2021), middle-class participation (Noll & Budniok, 2023) or anti-corruption and good-governance issues as sources of discontent (Lewis, 2021).

The panel aims to bring together various theoretical and methodological perspectives on the current protests in Africa. Who are protesters, what tools, strategy and organization principles do they use, what brought them to the streets, or what negotiation power protests have and what decides about their success?

We invite papers that focus on:

- protests and state of democracy/governance/corruption
- political activism, social movements and role of social media
- Gen Z (born 1997-2012) and political protest
- governmental responses (e.g., repression, renegotiating, buying time, populism)
- African protests' internationalization, Global responses, adoption of protests elsewhere
- regional specifics of protests

### Re-centering African subjects and subjectivities in global regionalism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Jens Herpolsheimer (Germany) & Lynda Iroulo (Qatar)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to re-center African subjects and subjectivities in global regionalism, by investigating different policy fields, sites, and practices, and discusses the methodological and theoretical implications that result from that shift in perspective.

#### ABSTRACT

In recent times, African regionalisms have been highly visible in global politics, be it for their role during the Covid-19 pandemic, the acceptance of the African Union into the G20, or the withdrawal of three Sahelian states from the Economic Community of West African States, following coups d'état in those states, along changing geopolitics. All of this testifies to the immense importance of African regionalisms in global politics, playing out on and outside the continent. However, African subjects and subjectivities, that is different African actors, their agency and sense-making, still remain underexplored in regionalism literature, especially when it comes to theory-building. As a consequence, the “African dimension” of global regionalism and global IR still awaits more serious and systematic scientific attention. Against this backdrop, this panels seeks contributions that (i) aim to re-center African subjects and subjectivities in global regionalism, investigating different policy fields, sites, and practices; (ii) explore the methodological implications that come with this shift of perspective; and (iii) reflect on new approaches towards developing concepts and theories from Africa. Together, they will tackle the issue of difference / otherness while at the same time emphasizing entanglements, connectedness and co-constitution, as Mbembe sensitizes us for, through the notion of Afropolitanism.

## Reimagining Pan-Africanism: Africa and the African Diaspora in a Changing World

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Daniel Mulugeta (United Kingdom) & Innocent Batsani-Ncube (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the contemporary relevance of the idea of Pan-Africanism by examining its philosophical foundations and practical applications in various areas in African and diasporan contexts. It aims to move beyond idealized perspectives, address internal contradictions, and assess its role in fostering solidarity politics and collective action.

### ABSTRACT

Pan-Africanism originated as an anti-racist cultural and intellectual movement among Africans in the diaspora, challenging racial segregation and discrimination. It evolved into a broader resistance against colonialism, imperialism, and neocolonialism. By the mid-20th century, figures like Kwame Nkrumah redefined it as a framework for emancipation and achieving continental political and economic self-sufficiency (Adi 2018). Institutionalized through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and later the African Union (AU), Pan-Africanism has been pivotal in shaping African inter-state politics. Despite instances of co-optation to justify authoritarian rule, it continues to drive aspirations for regional integration, economic transformation, and Africa's proactive agency within the international system. It also underpins solidarity against racism. Today, new frameworks such as black internationalism, Afropolitanism, and Afropolitanism seek to capture evolving African identity and diaspora experiences. Yet, Pan-Africanism remains vital for understanding both Africa's and the African diaspora's roles in global politics and their ongoing struggles against racial inequalities. This panel invites papers that critically engage with Pan-Africanism, re-examining its philosophical foundations and practical applications in contemporary African and diasporan contexts. We encourage contributions that move beyond romanticized narratives, address its internal contradictions, and explore its potential as a guiding force for solidarity politics and collective action. We welcome papers from various disciplines on topics including, but not limited to, Africa's role in the changing multilateral world; African institutions (AU and RECs); regional integration, borders and borderlands; neocolonialism and economic development; and diaspora politics, cultural identity, transnationalism, and solidarity politics.

### Rethinking “social cohesion” as European knowledge formation: African epistemologies, cosmologies and practices

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** **Christi van der Westhuizen** (South Africa) & **Ulf Engel** (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

A brief archaeology shows most authors on social cohesion locate themselves in Western thought. How can African knowledges such as Gada (Ethiopia) and Ubuntu (Southern Africa) decentre European understandings?

#### ABSTRACT

Widespread perception of multiple global crises has led to a renewal of the concept of social cohesion in both politics and academia. Generally, social cohesion is positively connotated and associated with processes of “peacebuilding” and “development”. Most scholars and international organisations treat social cohesion as a precondition for building resilient collectives or institutions. Also in Africa, institutional actors have operationalised the term to measure and compare social cohesion within or between societies. However, the term remains a floating signifier filled by social actors with shifting meanings. The proposed panel draws on critical, postcolonial thinking to address the empirical gap in studying how social cohesion is approached in, by and for the African continent. A brief archaeology shows that most authors on social cohesion locate themselves in a Western school of thought, referencing European sociologists such as Ferdinand Tönnies and D. Émile Durkheim. Important African measures of social cohesion are based on this school of thought, which raises the question of conceptual Eurocentrism. If African societies and their inherent tensions are conceptualised based on European experience, how well does this universalised knowledge travel? In reflecting on the ECAS call to make sense of African, Afropolitan and Afropean modes of belonging and the particularities such as history, politics and economy in relation to belonging, the panel will interrogate how African cosmologies, knowledges and practices can inform, and possibly decentre, European understandings of social cohesion. Among others, Gada in Ethiopia and Ubuntu in Southern Africa will be considered.

## Revealing the potential of EU studies in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Jiří Schneider (Czech Republic) & Jackline Nyerere (Kenya)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel should attract papers focusing on how tertiary education institutions prepare future generations for Afro-European cooperation. There is a range of relevant issues within the implementation of knowledge about the EU within development cooperation that should be tackled.

### ABSTRACT

This panel seeks to explore how to deepen the understanding of future decision-makers and stakeholders regarding the functioning of the European Union (EU) and the societal mindset of its representatives. Gaining knowledge in this area is crucial for several reasons. First, it will identify pathways to teach about the EU's operations directly within African nations, equipping local leaders with the necessary insights to navigate this complex landscape.

Second, the importance of this knowledge extends to fostering cooperation with major global players such as China, the African Union, and BRICS nations. Understanding the values and thought processes within EU institutions is vital for African countries to effectively engage in partnerships that advance shared objectives and development goals.

Third, this panel will address the significant question of whether educational initiatives focusing on the EU within African contexts can mitigate the issue of brain drain from Africa to Europe, facilitating local expertise retention and fostering growth.

Moreover, the panel will act as a platform for networking among potential partners, aiming to develop educational frameworks around European affairs directly within Africa and enhance collaborations between European and African institutions.

The primary benefit of this panel for African nations lies in the development of educational opportunities within this domain, providing students with a more affordable alternative to expensive studies in Europe, ultimately contributing to a more informed and interconnected future.

## Social protection and social citizenship in the aftermath of COVID

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Marianne Ulriksen (Denmark) & Hangala Siachiwena (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Did COVID prompt enduring reforms of social protection across Africa, as was widely predicted at the time? This panel will present new research on elite and public opinion, the contestations between international politics and national governments over policy-making and implementation.

### ABSTRACT

The expansion of social protection is integral to social citizenship (or inclusion) and associated sense of belonging. The growing literature on the politics of policy-making and implementation focuses primarily on the contestation or ‘negotiations’ between international organisations (promoting their preferred models of social protection), national governments and community-level actors. At the root of this politics lies the disputed appropriateness in Africa of models promoted by organisations from Europe and North America, especially given contrasting norms and values. The social protection debate is thus, in part, a debate about Africa’s place in the world, epistemologically and normatively as well as economically and politically.

The COVID pandemic and ensuing lockdowns and global recession prompted international organisations to renew their lobbying for the expansion of social protection. Looking back, was COVID a game-changer? Have the various ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ expansions of programmes or technical reforms (including of application and payment systems) persisted? Why (or why not)? Did the pandemic reshape how actors viewed inclusive or equitable public policies in general and social protection in particular? Have international organisations or governments learnt lessons from the pandemic – including about what ‘works’ and what did not ‘work’ – that will shape future responses to shocks or crises?

This panel will build on very successful sessions at ECAS2023 by analysing the evolving role of social protection in social citizenship in the aftermath of COVID. We anticipate that papers will present new research on elite and public opinion, reform processes and contestations over implementation.

## The “new” role of the European Union in crisis resolution in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Luís Bernardino (Portugal) & Ana Carina Franco (Portugal)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel intend to discuss the “new” role of the European Union in conflict resolution in Africa and provide some conceptualization and academic discussion about this new paradigm and how the European Union can become more effective on this matter.

### ABSTRACT

The European Union (EU)’s new instutional architecture following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 included the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the operational expansion of EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Integrated in the EEAS, the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate has been overseeing the integrated civilian-military strategic planning within CSDP.

Within EU’s Comprehensive Approach, African CSDP missions tend to reflect not only functional, but also normative concerns. Those concerns are all more important given the current global challenges, namely growing great and middle-power competition, including in Africa, and the so-called crisis of multilateralism, including Western-led peacekeeping.

The panel welcomes papers aiming at providing new understandings and innovative analysis of EU’s role in peace support and crisis management in Africa. They may explore EU's actorness globally and participation in international peace and security efforts through its CSDP missions and operations in Africa, as well as its relations with African organisations, particularly the African Union, and other actors in the continent.



## The flipside of disinformation in the Afropean: Information suppression in African autocracies and their diasporas

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Lovise Aalen (Norway) & Simon Turner (Sweden)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Diasporas have always been a key resource for African states to build and disseminate narratives about their country. We invite papers analysing how information is suppressed in the interface between African authoritarian regimes and their diasporas. What decides which stories are *not* told?

### ABSTRACT

The Afropean, African diasporas in Europe, play a critical role for African regimes in the production and contestation of information that can legitimise or delegitimise their rule. Internet has given regimes new tools in transnational repression, enlarging their opportunities to promote or mute certain narratives and voices. While disinformation has been given much attention in research and policy, the suppression of information has so far been understudied. We underline the importance of studying the suppression of information both offline and online, from actions such as internet and media shutdowns, censorship or flooding the internet to the more indirect imposition of norms of what should remain untold.

In the Tigray war in Ethiopia in 2020–22, for example, information suppression was an important part of the dynamics between the Ethiopian regime, the Tigrayan opponents, and the diaspora in Europe and the US. While internet was shut down in Tigray in major parts of the war, certain stories were promoted while others silenced both online and in traditional media. A polarized diaspora played a crucial role in these efforts.

In this panel, we invite papers which analyse attempts to silence voices or narratives within and outside a country's borders, serving the interest of strengthening a regime's grip on power. We encourage contributions which look at the role of the Afropean in these efforts - not as passive receivers, but as active agents, who may contest or reinforce a regime's suppression of information.

## The Global South Speaks Back – African Perspectives on Intersectionality

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Diana Højlund Madsen (Sweden) & Mandiedza Parichi (Zimbabwe)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Intersectionality is a central concept, but it has received criticism for essentialising identity politics and replicating the extractive methods associated with traditional epistemic approaches from the global North. The panel explores how African perspectives speak back to debates on the concept.

### ABSTRACT

The notion of intersectionality challenges the perception of women as a homogenous group as their life-words differ according to ability, age, class, ethnicity, race and sexuality. Intersectionality is a critical conceptual tool for scholarship that focuses on gender, across disciplines, especially in African studies. However, it has also received criticism as it may further essentialise identity politics in Africa and replicate the extractive methods associated with traditional epistemic approaches from the global North.

Crenshaw coined the notion of intersectionality to grasp the crosscutting experiences by black American women caught up between racism and patriarchy in their struggles to overcome violence, oppression and discrimination. She divides 'structural intersectionality' emphasising how women of colour with their intersectional location are markedly different from white women, and 'political intersectionality' where both feminist and antiracial politics in tandem have marginalised violence against black American women (Crenshaw 2006). However, the notion of intersectionality is not new in an African context. Oyewùmí unveils in her study that "The principle that determined social organization was seniority, which was based on chronological age. Yorùbá kinship terms did not denote gender, and other nonfamilial social categories were not gender-specific either" (Oyewùmí 1997: 13). She further elaborates how older women in pre-colonial times occupied more powerful local political spaces. The panel explores African manifestations and critiques of the notion of intersectionality and asks: How do African perspectives speak back to the existing debates on intersectionality? What newness do African perspectives offer?

## The Politics of Remembrance Amongst Post-Conflict Generations in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Lena Reim (United Kingdom) & Line Kuppens (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how the socio-political dimensions of inherited memories of violence shape the politics of belonging, citizenship, & identity among post-conflict generations in Africa. It invites interdisciplinary contributions to examine the political uses and implications of memory in Africa.

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores how memories of violence are inherited, reconstructed, and mobilized by younger generations in African contexts. The focus is on the political implications and uses of these memories, which have remained underexplored in scholarship that has focused on processes of intergenerational transmission, collective trauma, and socio-emotional healing. In some cases, younger generations show little political engagement with violent pasts —whether distant or recent— or cast them actively aside. In others, however, they reanimate them to make political claims about identity, citizenship, and belonging in the present. This raises critical questions about the specific conditions that influence memory politics amongst post-conflict and post-violence generations.

To interrogate these issues, this panel invites contributions from across social sciences disciplines to critically examine the socio-political dimensions of remembrance of the recent or more distant violent past amongst post-conflict generations (in a broad sense) in Africa and the African diaspora. It welcomes methodologically innovative approaches, ranging from reflexive auto-ethnographies and participatory action research to archival research and oral histories. These approaches can illuminate how memories of violence and trauma are inherited, reconstructed, or forgotten by younger generations, and how these processes are shaped by socio-political and cultural contexts, both within and beyond physical and digital spaces.

## Towards constructive collaboration: Engaging with African perspectives in peace and security policy

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Violence and Conflict Resolution

**ORGANISERS:** Gelila Enbaye (Germany) & Oyewole Oginni (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will explore practical crisis mitigation approaches that emphasize African agency. By examining norms, practices, and dynamics among African actors, it aims to conceptualize constructive engagement between African and European stakeholders in peace and security policy.

### ABSTRACT

Understanding African perspectives on peace and security policy is crucial for centering African agency and avoiding past mistakes in a time when global order is being renegotiated. Africa faces significant security challenges, such as violent conflicts in the Horn of Africa, military coups and armed insurgencies in the Sahel, rising violent extremism, and resistance to international peace operations such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Decades of interventions based on western models have often been unsuitable for local contexts and have undermined human security, hindered lasting peace, and strained relations between the west and Africa. Current public and political discourse frequently reduces the involvement of external actors on the continent to another "scramble for Africa" and lacks constructive proposals for future external engagement. Simultaneously, the notion of "African solutions to African problems" has been undermined by the decline of African institutions like African Union, ECOWAS and the rise of anti-democratic leaders.

This panel will focus on practical approaches to crisis mitigation that emphasize African agency while examining the complex relationships between African and European stakeholders. It will ask: How can African institutions, stakeholders, and external actors engage on an equal footing today to foster genuine partnerships and effectively address key security challenges? The panel will explore foundational norms, emerging operational practices, and areas of both contention and consensus among African actors. This discussion aims to lay the groundwork for conceptualizing constructive engagement in peace and security policy between African and European stakeholders at national, intergovernmental and societal levels.

### Who Owns African Research Data?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Johanna Havemann (Germany) & Nokhuthula Mchunu (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Research data ownership is crucial for African communities as much of the research on African territories is stored outside the continent, limiting access for local researchers. Several initiatives aim to reclaim this data through open access, data sovereignty, and improved digital infrastructure.

#### ABSTRACT

Research data ownership is a critical question, especially for African research communities. Most research outcomes “About Africa”, African affairs and resulting from research that has been and is being executed on African territories, flora, and fauna is being published, archived, and stored on servers outside the African continent. The implications are that many African researchers do not have easy access to their own research data, if any.

To change this AfricArXiv and other research repositories have been set up in recent years to enable African scholarly stakeholders to take ownership and “decolonize” research literature and data archiving practices. Ownership of research data is often tied to the licensing models imposed by dominant institutions. Still, as African countries build capacity to store, archive, and preserve their digital research outputs, the conversation shifts toward claiming control over intellectual resources.

We will discuss how licensing frameworks impact ownership and what limitations exist for African institutions aiming to assert autonomy. In addressing best practices, we will explore how local and regional community ownership can be facilitated through open access policies, data sovereignty initiatives, and digital infrastructure. Key topics will include the importance of Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) and quality metadata in ensuring African researchers’ work remains discoverable and attributable, thereby supporting decolonization efforts.

By analyzing these interconnected themes, this panel will highlight practical, feasible measures that can help African institutions transfer ownership of research data from external entities back to the continent, and will recommend strategies for achieving true digital independence in research.

## Women, Peace and Security in Africa: Whose agenda?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Jenny Lorentzen (Norway) & Nana Toure (Mali)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

25 years after the adoption of UNSC resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), this panel will address the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa from a bottom-up perspective.

### ABSTRACT

2025 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Since 2000, the UN Security Council has adopted ten WPS resolutions, understood to constitute an important international normative framework known as the WPS agenda. This framework guides the work of many international, regional, national and local organizations who work to promote gender equality and gender perspectives in a range of institutional and social contexts. This panel speaks to the conference theme by asking whose agenda is it in practice in Africa? Who are the drivers of the implementation of the agenda, as well as the shapes and forms it takes on the ground in African countries? Often criticized for being a top-down and donor-driven agenda, this panel brings together scholars researching the agenda and related themes to discuss it from a bottom-up perspective.

## Xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa Relations: A Review of Special Relationship between the two Countries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Politics and International Relations

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Abdul-Wasi Moshood (Nigeria) & Anuoluwapo Durokifa (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The relationship between Nigeria and South Africa assumed new phase post apartheid, seeking to know the special relationship between the two countries in recent time, The panel seeks to further interrogate the impact of this rivalry on the advancement of African identity generally.

### ABSTRACT

The interdependence among states have necessitated the migration of their citizens across national borders. While migration has deepened relations in some instances, it has also generated tension among states. This duality is particularly exemplified in the complex relationship between Nigeria and South Africa. This panel sheds light on the relationship between the two pivotal countries in the light of Xenophobic attacks on citizens of other African countries in South Africa. Essentially, the paper revisits the discussion on the drivers and state responses to attacks against foreign nationals including Nigerians in South Africa. It is in this context that this panel interrogates the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa. It engages the questions: In what ways is special relationship conceived between Nigeria and South Africa? What are the factors responsible for xenophobic attack in South Africa? How has Nigeria (and people) responded to this cultural chauvinism? How compelling is this xenophobia to reducing the drive to deepen special relationship between Nigeria and South Africa? The paper adopts a qualitative analysis that unpacks the implications of the periodic xenophobic attacks in South Africa against Africans and unearths responses to it and its effects on Nigeria/South Africa's special relationship drive.

## Religion

Lifeworld: Secularities, Immanence and Governance

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Religion

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Augustine Agwuele (United States) & Asonzeh Ukah (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We empirically and theoretically explore how African peoples and societies perceive secularity and secularism, aiming to clarify how ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ spaces and their related languages are experienced and understood across different African communities.

### ABSTRACT

From the appellation “Daddy G.O.” to the politicization of ‘religion’ and religionization of politics, there is a deepening entanglement of religion with all facets of everyday life in Africa, resulting to the contemporary blossoming *economy of religion* that permeates ostensibly irreligious, ‘secular’ spaces and communicative signals with partisanship. Drawing from the lifeworld of African peoples and societies, this panel explores empirically and theoretically the notion and practice of secularity and ‘secularism’ in its situatedness, analyzing how these conceptually separated ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ spaces and related languages are experienced and understood in local settings.

Submissions should critically examine the role of secularism and secularity within their specific contexts, and the relevancy of the demarcated spheres in societal organization and individual life experiences either from a diachronic or synchronic perspective. Contributors are invited to interrogate the vaunted ‘religiosity’ of Africans, using their common historical experience of western and eastern proselytization, colonialism, and neocolonial hegemony as point/s of departure. They are to explore everyday experiences in the nexus of religion and public socio-cultural- economic and political institutions among others and consider how these ‘contexts’ constraint and particularize the [plurality of] meaning, practice and place of ‘secular’ and ‘secularism’ on the continent. They should also evaluate the modernist assumptions foundational to the evolution of post-colonial African states and urban spaces relative to pre-colonial societal organization of private and public spaces within the conceptually dichotomized ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ spheres. Overall, we welcome papers exploring ‘religions’, their embodied, embedded and contextualized entangled manifestations within their environments.



### Religious Infrastructure and Developmental Mobilities in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Religion

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Benjamin Kirby (Germany) & Rodney Munemo (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how religious infrastructures shape—and are shaped by—different conditions and experiences of im/mobility and development in African contexts. In doing so, it seeks to challenge prevailing conceptions of religion, mobility, and development in Africa.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel invites researchers to reconsider the relationship between religion, mobility, and development in Africa through the lens of infrastructure.

Recent years have seen a groundswell of African studies exploring religious infrastructure, addressing configurations as diverse as algorithms, radio towers, and traditional religious shrines (Babere, Massawe, and Benussi 2024; Burchardt 2023; Chenchenko 2023; Desplat 2024; Garbin, Coleman, and Millington 2023; Fredericks 2024; Ibrahim 2024; Nrenzah 2024). This literature foregrounds how religious infrastructures—broadly conceived as social and technical enabling arrangements that are religiously marked, or that support religious practices—transform worlds in and beyond Africa (Kirby 2024).

Our panel puts this literature into conversation with ongoing work on im/mobilities in African contexts (Agbiboa 2022; Mavhunga, Cuvelier, and Pype 2016; Noret 2019; Nkwi 2015; Nyamnjoh and Brudvig 2016). We investigate how religious infrastructures shape movements and blockages of people, organizations, ideas, objects, resources, and sentiments. Speaking in particular to “developmental mobilities”, we foreground dynamics of mobility and fixity as they intersect with questions of socio-economic development (e.g., capital flows, migration, supply chains, data transfer, social mobility).

We explicitly welcome contributions that experiment with different conceptions of religious infrastructure and developmental mobility. Potential discussion questions include:

- How are religious infrastructures shaping different dynamics and experiences of im/mobility and development?
- What sorts of religious infrastructures are developing in response to diverse conditions of (developmental) im/mobility?
- How do religious infrastructures facilitate or constrain efforts to govern developmental mobilities?
- How might religious infrastructures challenge prevailing conceptions of (intersections between) religion, development, and im/mobility in Africa?

## Uncertain Belonging(s): Material Religion and the Decolonization of Knowledge About Africa – Panel sponsored by Africa the journal of the International Africa Institute

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Religion

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Birgit Meyer (the Netherlands) & Duane Jethro (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Taking collections of African artefacts as nodes of indigenous, colonial and postcolonial assemblage that condense clashing meanings, this panel engages with belonging by asking: how can a material religion approach develop a decolonizing framing that enables thinking artefacts from Africa anew?

### ABSTRACT

Artefacts from Africa of religious and cultural significance kept in European museums have been a flashpoint of discussion that concern questions of belonging. Heritage, entwining a sense of identity and ownership, has strongly informed this debate. A history of colonial relations with Europe saw African material things extracted under coercive political conditions. Across their trajectories from Africa to Europe, they were variably classified as religious objects, art and finally cultural heritage. Uncertain belongings from Africa were thus recruited for key theory building, as in the case of “fetish”-objects, and were crucial for staking distinctions in difference, race and belonging. Loaded with charged social, political and intellectual histories, artefacts from Africa in museums are witnesses of colonial entanglements that urgently must be unpacked through an archaeology of knowledge production.

What was construed as “Religion in Africa” has often been dismissed as bearing a misguided materialist concern with things, contrasted with a modern, Christian concern with meaning and belief. Yet a material religion approach suggests that all religion is enacted in and through relations with the material. Taking collections of African artefacts as nodes of indigenous, colonial and postcolonial assemblages that condense clashing meanings, values and uses, this panel engages with the conference theme of belonging by asking: how can a material religion approach help to develop a decolonizing framing that enables thinking artefacts from Africa anew? What new knowledges but also subject positions does it allow for that break out of inherited concepts and frameworks that structure belonging for Africa today?

## Sociology

### (Re)thinking the crises and changes in politics in Africa in the 21st century: decolonial perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Yves Valéry OBAME (Switzerland) & Salomon Essaga Eteme (Cameroon)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How do contemporary political crises in African societies contribute to the renewal of political analysis? This panel aims to show that social dynamics in Africa are restructuring the analysis of political phenomena from a decolonial perspective.

#### ABSTRACT

In the social sciences, Africa is seen as a ‘cultural area’ in terms of the contingent and multifaceted social and political dynamics that have permeated it for centuries. Over and above the diversity of disciplinary perspectives that reflect the profound transformations structuring its political field, one of the challenges that emerged from debates within the literature in recent years is to make intelligible the changes in the ‘enunciation of politics’ on the continent, using a variety of approaches. These changes can be observed in a variety of ways: the return of the militarization of political adversity and its apparent popular support, the rapid expansion of transnational public policies of multi-sector governance and the dynamics of their institutionalization, the crisis of participation and the emergence of a protesting and unruly citizenship of young people, the emergence of civil society actors with original political claims and who federate discontent, the ‘revenge’ of societies against the ‘conspiratorial’ West, the renewal of the register of witchcraft, the crisis of democracy, etc., all of which constitute contemporary forms of republicization. These are contemporary ways of identifying political crises and changes in Africa. The recent political history of African societies thus offers a range of potentially fruitful phenomena for political analysis, while simultaneously posing new challenges for understanding them.

This panel seeks to bring together researchers from fields such as sociology, anthropology, history, geography, political science and related fields who are focused on contemporary ways of identifying political crises and changes in Africa from a decolonial perspective.

### African masculinity in the age of capitalism and globalization

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Camille MAUBERT (United Kingdom) & Adebayo Quadry-Adekanbi (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores evolving scholarship on African masculinity, examining how shifting culture, politics, and economics reshape conceptualisations of masculinity. It addresses past and present discourses of 'African-ness' and their influence on expressions of masculinity in Africa and the diaspora.

#### ABSTRACT

Over the years, various forms of African masculinity have been described, from the 'big man' catering to political clients to the patriarchal household head, the hypersexual and heterosexual celebrity, or the violent criminal or combatant. Scholars have documented struggles in meeting cultural and economic norms and expectations of African masculinity while also highlighting attempts to resist these norms through alternative expressions, including finding new markers in fame, fashion, and violence. These performances of masculinity intersect with broader dynamics of power, political economy, mobility, globalisation, and racial capitalism, generating new and sometimes contradictory expectations.

This panel explores evolving scholarship on African masculinity, exploring how its meanings shift amid changing expectations in public and private life concerning money, work, status, family, and relationships. Crucially, we aim to expand the conversation beyond men's experiences, considering how colonialism and continued imperialism have disrupted gender meanings in African societies. In addition, the assumption that masculinity is inherently tied to men looms large and requires re-examination. By including perspectives from identity groups not typically associated with masculinity, we hope to offer fresh insights into how they conceptualise, inhabit, and enact masculinity.

We invite empirically grounded reflections on topics including, but not limited to:

- - Past and present discourses shaping representations of African masculinity.
- - The impact of capitalism, migration, and sociopolitical changes on masculinities.
- - The influence of 'African-ness' on masculinity in Africa and the diaspora.
- - How diverse identities navigate and contest expectations of masculinity.

### African, Afropean and Afropolitan: (Re)thinking Identities, Cultures, Belongingness and the African Futures

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye (Nigeria) & Evelyn Aku Adjandeh (Ghana)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how ‘Afro’ identities are shaped within global contexts, addressing tensions between cultural identity, nationality, and belonging for African migrants and the diaspora. It examines these through decolonial, historical, socio-political and theoretical frameworks.

#### ABSTRACT

The Africans have been a “Black Box” to be expounded in new ideologies and methodologies (Bruce Janz 2002). For decades, cultural mixing has become Africans’ way of belonging to the world, thus charting the course of social construction and knowledge production carved beyond colonial frameworks. Achille Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony* (2001) has interrogated the contemporary existence for Africans and the possibilities of an autonomous subject free from ‘otherness’. In articulating this existence, Taiye Selasi’s seminal essay “What is Afropolitanism or Bye Bye Barber” (2005) has received critical attention from Afrocentric critics with differing postulations. Thus, there is a visible tension between establishing Africans’ identity and continuity in the world. Observably, the influence of ‘European Dream’ and the ‘Denial of Self’ is perceived as a “crude marker of cultural commodification designed and funded by the West (Wainaina 2012). We therefore ask: How do ‘Afro’ identities intersect and diverge to nurture a sense of self? How can we (re)conceptualize and (re)negotiate race, ethnicity and belonging in a globalized world with fluid borders? How do nationality, cultural heritage and global citizenship help to navigate multiple belongingness? This panel argues that ‘Afro identities’ are complicated, characterized by shifts and changes in ideologies and practices. These issues assume a more transnational nature that have spread in discourses and other forms of social media networks. This panel interrogates the African futures via multidisciplinary modes of inquiry on global diaspora issues like migration, geographic spaces, belonging, in-betweenness, displacement, hybridity, trauma, human rights, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, Pan-Africanism etc.

### Afropolitanism and decoloniality. Debating the reform of pan-africanism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Patrick Awondo (Cameroon) & Aline Nanko (Switzerland)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Decoloniality and Afropolitanism are key paradigms in the ongoing discussions about reforming Pan-africanism. This panel critically explores how the dialogue between these concepts might contribute to a unified afro-descendant project amid cultural, aesthetic, and political transformations.

#### ABSTRACT

The last two decades have seen a resurgence of debate on the future of Afro-descendant diasporas. These debates cover intellectual and critical issues as well as militant and political ones (Fila-Bakabadio, 2022). In the field of intellectual and critical debate, two paradigms stood out at the turn of the 2000s. These are decoloniality and afropolitanism. Why compare these concepts? First, the gaps between these notions encapsulate the current debates on what it is fair to call the reform of pan-africanism; an old debate (Mbembé 2004; Appiah, 2000) that has taken on new significance with the rise of movements within Afro-descendant struggles (Rabaka, 2020; Afolayan, 2017). Second, these mobilizations, both academic and political, have significantly renewed the debates on the continuities of Pan-Africanism as we witness a clash of competing ideas aiming to define the ideological, artistic and aesthetic or even political narratives of Afro-descendant becoming in the world. Because both concepts have become global paradigms, mobilized from Europe to Asia and across the Americas to address issues as varied as coloniality, ecology, migrations, cosmopolitanism, and minority issues, the discussion proposed in this panel carries critical, scientific, intellectual, and potentially political stakes. Is there a convergence of struggles between decoloniality and afropolitanism? To what extent can the decolonial and afropolitan movements bring about a reform of pan-africanism? What insights do they offer into the cultural, aesthetic and political transformations taking place among Afro-descendants? How can we rethink the intellectual foundations of a unified Afro-descendant project today?

## Borders, Citizenship and “othered” modes of belonging in Southern Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Duduzile Ndlovu (South Africa) & Nomaqhawe Molife (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Focusing on migration and border governance in Southern Africa, the panel invites papers that engage and explore a decolonial approach to studying and writing about borders and belonging. We welcome submissions that use novel approaches to research including arts based methods.

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the question of belonging in Africa by looking at the regulation of borders and mobility. Focusing on migration and border governance in Southern Africa, the panel invites papers that engage and explore a decolonial approach to the study of borders. Starting from the argument that borders continue to be violent extensions of a colonial logic of policing and criminalising movement. Furthermore, in the wake of the “European crisis”, Europe has reinvigorated externalisation of its border regime; development aid “capacitates” African migration governance to contain Africans within the continent and facilitate their repatriation. While the debates on borders and belonging abound within the academy. This panel is particularly interested in interventions that widen the conversation beyond academic theorizations to include the arts such as music, literature or visual art. The panel invites papers that engage with the concept, practices and experiences of borders from the perspective of the subaltern living through and across borders. We invite submissions that explore how research on migration governance can translate, bridge and disseminate to wider audiences beyond the academy and engage people traditionally excluded from policy-making? This panel invites submissions that explore African realities, belonging and positionalities through and across borders, real or imagined, and the ways in which people submit to, negotiate and or resist borders and craft belongings within and or outside the prescribed formal, informal, real and or imagined borders.

## Conflict and knowledge production in Ethiopia. Critical perspectives on social science and violence

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Mitiku Gabrehiwot Tesfaye (France) & Mehdi Labzaé (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

In Ethiopia's current wars, people fight over history, over the institutional set-up, over resources, over rights. All these are conditioned by understandings of society and history produced in Academia, with social science tools. It's time to assess links between conflicts and our disciplines.

### ABSTRACT

This panel questions the links between knowledge production in Ethiopia and the current wars that devastate the country. Political conflicts over the past decades have been, to a large extent, struggles over knowledge and knowledge production. Representations of 'Ethiopia' and the limits of its polity have been contested, with tools like the 'question of nationalities' or the 'center/periphery' dichotomy, inherited from materialist epistemologies that linked these representations with access to rights and resources (Zelege 2020). Such materialist epistemologies have only shaken a 'Great Tradition' of Ethiopian studies that counted on solid institutions to ensure its resilience (di Lorenzi 2018; Marzagora 2017). How are scholars' understandings of the Ethiopian societies and their politics used by warring parties? How are academics involved (or not?) in the wars? How do the current international structuration of academia and the division of academic labor inform the contributions of social science to current political dynamics? Can collaborative research mitigate inequalities in the distribution of academic resources? How do other (foreign, potentially nationalist) schools of thought interact with Ethiopian studies, and with which consequences? And how do current wars affect the production of social science? Multiple methodologies can address such questions, from the critical readings of academic productions or methodological reflections to the sociological analysis of academics (scholars' (group) biographies, analyses of controversies, emerging new '-studies', etc.) Papers comparing entanglements of knowledge production and political violence in Ethiopia with other war-affected countries in Africa are welcome.



## Confronting Identity, Belonging, and Exclusion: Decolonial and Critical Perspectives

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Nomaswazi Kubeka (South Africa) & Josh Platzky Miller (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel engages the themes of identity, belonging, alienation, and exclusion in post-colonial identity by drawing on a range of contemporary and interdisciplinary perspectives in the social sciences to critique formulations of African identity.

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the themes of identity, belonging, alienation, and exclusion for the (post-)colonial subject by analyzing their self-understanding (identity), their being in the world (belonging), as well as the social conditions that inform and impede or limit their beliefs and actions (especially modes of exclusion and alienation). We explore, in Althusserian terms, the material existence of ideology and hence the relationship between the material and ideological at the interface of identity, decoloniality, and knowledge. As a result, questions of social position, structure, and categories of race, gender, class, and citizenship become important. In this context, there seems to be a tension between reclaiming one's identity as a form of decolonization and constructing a new identity that fits our present and future worlds. Leonhard Praeg described the former as a "myth of return" and the tension may arise because: (a) that original "place" of return no longer exists; it has been forgotten or transformed; (b) this new "place" is a source of alienation and fracture for the subject; or (c) because the original "place" never existed in the first place. To understand identity formation, as well as belonging and exclusion we must thus consider the relevant social conditions and how these change. This panel provides decolonial and critical perspectives of the relevant social conditions by linking the themes of this panel to 'classic' markers of identity, such as race, gender, class, and origin and examining how oppression, xenophobia, racialism, and sexism impact the process of reconstructing identity.

## Cultural Hybridities and the evolution of West African Diaspora communities in Europe

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Chioma Daisy Onyige (Germany) & Aniekani Brown (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the cultural hybridities within West African diaspora communities in Europe, examining how identities are navigated and negotiated between the heritage of these West African countries in European cultural contexts.

### ABSTRACT

The panel is interested in papers and studies that explore the cultural hybridities that emerge within West African diaspora communities across Europe. As globalization and transnational mobility increase, West African migrants find themselves in a unique position where they must navigate and negotiate their identities between their rich West African heritage and the diverse cultural landscapes of their host European countries. This panel is looking for papers that analyze the evolving nature of these hybrid identities, focusing on factors such as language, religion, social networks and generational shifts. By exploring the lived experiences of West African migrants, this panel seeks to understand how cultural hybridities manifest in daily life, community formation, and expressions of belonging. This panel is also interested in the role of transnational networks in maintaining connections to West Africa while integrating into European societies. This exploration of West African-European cultural hybridities contributes to broader discussions on migration, multiculturalism, and the dynamic interplay between local and global identities.

### Decolonial Perspectives on African, Afropolitan, and Afropean Identities: Rethinking Knowledge Production in Higher Education

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Oluwatoyin Ajani (South Africa) & Chinaza Uleanya (South Africa)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We'll discuss how African universities challenge global North narratives and address race, class, and gender, showcasing their role in shaping inclusive global knowledge.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the changing nature of African, Afropolitan, and Afropean identities through the lens of decoloniality and knowledge production in African higher education. With identity politics gaining traction worldwide, African identities are crucial in challenging the dominance of perspectives from the global North. We will investigate how decoloniality reshapes our understanding of identity and highlights the role of African universities in creating knowledge that reflects the continent's rich cultural and historical diversity.

We will focus on how these identities are formed and contested, revealing how they push back against Eurocentric views that have long influenced global knowledge. Our discussions will look at how African universities are developing new forms of knowledge that prioritise local contexts and lived experiences, allowing for identities that are hybrid, fluid, and deeply rooted in African ways of knowing.

Additionally, we will consider how factors like race, class, gender, and mobility interact to shape these identities and their broader implications for society, politics, and the environment. This panel aims to contribute to the decolonial movement by emphasising the role of African higher education in producing knowledge that challenges established global North narratives and supports the ongoing quest for intellectual independence and inclusive belonging.

### Decolonizing Humanitarian Studies: Epistemology, Positionality and Identity in Africa's Humanitarian Scholarship

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Delu Lusambya (Congo, the Democratic Republic of) & Carolien Jacobs (the Netherlands)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores contextualized, interactive, and collaborative approaches to humanitarian studies, focusing on the theoretical and methodological contribution of African scholars to the study of societies and vulnerable communities experiencing humanitarian crises.

#### ABSTRACT

The field of humanitarian studies has been criticized for being dominated by the global north. It is considered a privileged and specialized field for a selected few, who, unfortunately, are sometimes detached from the everyday realities of communities struggling with crises. Humanitarian crises are studied through conceptual frameworks developed by experts from developed countries, and local knowledge is deemed less scientific, stretching knowledge colonization. Contemporary humanitarian challenges demand a contextualized understanding of humanitarian crises. It requires conducting research equally and collaboratively with local knowledge producers. This panel welcomes papers that critically reflect on the normative, theoretical and methodological contribution that the field of African studies can make to humanitarian studies. It invites papers that reflect on humanitarian studies from a decolonial perspective, on research done by Africans and that employ a pluralistic approach to engage African scholarly and customary knowledge on humanitarianism. We aim to explore the influence of African and Afropolitan identities on the construction of knowledge in humanitarian studies, particularly in complex humanitarian contexts, and how this can strengthen the *raison d'être* of humanitarian studies. We particularly welcome papers focusing on researchers' positionality, cross-continental collaboration of humanitarian research, ethical considerations in humanitarian scholarships, and methodological challenges of empirical humanitarian research in Africa.

## Digital turn in mobility and border governance in Africa [AMMODI]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Zuzana Uhde (Czech Republic) & Alice Fill (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the digital shift in African border governance, and how digitization, biometrics & AI shape migration management. We examine the role of transnational actors, the impact on movement rights, and the resistance against this turn in the EU-Africa geopolitical space.

### ABSTRACT

Migration policies increasingly rely on digitisation and biometric practices in border management, a trend observed in both European and African states. Despite extensive critical scholarship, security and surveillance technologies continue to be presented as innovative techno-solutions for governing migration and securing borders in the name of counterterrorism, border management, and anti-trafficking or anti-smuggling efforts. The migration management has also become a significant driver for investments in digital military and surveillance technologies, including AI-driven border practices. Moreover, the convergence of military and technological industries not only addresses states' demands for smart border control infrastructure but also actively shapes and amplifies this demand through major corporations. In line with the established trends in border externalization, the EU's endorsement for biometrics and datafication processes in migration management, facilitated through various development programs and bilateral agreements, has notable implications for migration practices, security, and digital rights in Africa.

How is this digital turn in mobility and border management manifesting across different regions in Africa? What processes and actors are involved, and how are these being contested and resisted?

Raising these questions, this panel brings together critical contributions from migration and border studies, science and technology studies, African studies and international relations. It aims to collect papers that explore issues related to border digitisation and datafication, data extractivism, migrants' data dispossession, and biometric infrastructures within the geopolitical space between the EU and African countries. Through these lenses, it also examines the role of transnational actors, including the EU, the UN, and transnational corporations.

### Integrating gender in development projects in Africa – how to manage a balancing act (panel with translation English-French provided)

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality

**ORGANISERS:** Elisabeth Hofmann (France) & Yvette Onibon Doubogan (Benin)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Linked to larger debates on decoloniality and universalism, this panel explores how development projects become arenas for negotiating gender. Case studies highlight how negotiation inside projects is conducted, how it seeks to produce ownership for a gender approach, which effects it generates.

#### ABSTRACT

The demand to integrate gender in development projects can be seen as a dominant “global North paradigm” (even if gender as such is also contested by parts of the European societies, in this phase of growing far-right-wing movements). In spite of a strong official recognition of women rights by most African governments (e.g. ratification of conventions like CEDAW or the Maputo protocol), gender inequalities persist, particularly in rural areas.

The idea of fighting for more equality for women is not always unanimously plebiscited in socio-cosmic African societies where hierarchies are a key element of societal structure. Moreover, representations change in many African contexts under an increasing influence of divers monotheistic religious currents, political instrumentalisations, and a rise in conservative ideologies (anti-LGBTQIA+, anti-gender...).

In the development industry, the specificity of local cultures calls for adaptations of the gender approach to the context of each project. Donors’ gender preferences, gender policies and competencies of institutions involved in the project, but also the positionality of the implementation teams of projects all influence how local gender challenges are actually addressed and possibly changed through projects.

Linked to larger debates on decoloniality and universalism, this panel calls for communications exploring how development projects, these in-between spaces, become arenas for negotiating gender and womens’ empowerment. Case studies from different disciplines are welcome to highlight how this negotiation inside development projects is conducted, how it succeeds or fails in producing ownership of the quest for more equality and possibly which (sometimes contradictory) effects and impact it generates.

## Lived citizenship and belonging within and between continents: New narratives of forced migration and refuge beyond the state

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Mohamed Bakhit (Sudan) & Tanja Müller (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

How do forced migrants from the Horn of Africa navigate uncertain futures? The panel seeks to analyse how new forms of lived citizenship, mutuality, and political community are forged in (urban) settlements, refugee camps and across the wider transnational field extending to European diasporas.

### ABSTRACT

This panel focuses on the wider Horn of Africa region to explore how people with a history of forced migration build communities and exercise belonging – often despite lacking legal documentation, social security, and/or economic opportunities. How is belonging created and maintained beyond state structures and a global refugee system often hostile to forced migrants? One focus is on forced migrants who remain in their region of origin, or a neighbouring country, as is the case for most migrants globally. We ask how forced migrants exercise lived citizenship, secure social rights, livelihoods, education, and community beyond state structures or refugee regimes. We draw on work in capital cities in the Horn, including Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Kampala, Khartoum and Juba, but also welcome submissions focusing on other settlements and refugee camps.

The second focus is on members from those forcibly displaced communities who have moved further afield to European locations, often, but not necessarily, to cities with an already existing diaspora.

How do forced migrants from the Horn of Africa navigate the challenges to protect themselves from violent presents and uncertain futures, within the region and through linkages further afield in European host-countries? The panel seeks to analyse how new forms of lived citizenship, mutuality, and political community are forged in (urban) settlements, refugee camps and across the transnational field.

The panel invites contributions on these themes from the pre-colonial to the contemporary era, bringing together scholars and perspectives from critical citizenship studies, forced migration studies, history, sociology, and diaspora studies.

## Livelihood Insecurities & Future Generations: “Negotiating African, Afropean and Afropolitan Identities and Belongings”

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Annette Witherspoon (Germany) & Amanda Odoi (Sweden)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

We will explore experiences of negotiating African, Afropean and Afropolitan Identities and Belongings in the face of livelihood Insecurities, and for future generations, in the context of migration and diasporic living, rurality, conflict and post-conflict, labour, climate change, and the future.

### ABSTRACT

Risk, vulnerabilities and expectations produced and maintained through subjective power relations, remain a key feature of African, Afropean and Afropolitan identities and belonging, with contradictory outcomes.

We continue to see in contemporary society how, impacted by political regime changes, conflict, migration, political extremism, economic and natural resource pressures, global and local inequalities metamorphosize and take on increasingly daring forms. On the one hand, these situations produce livelihood insecurities, which engender precarious livelihoods and innovative individual, household and collective networks across local, trans-local, and national spaces. On the other hand, they attract different politics of othering that transform who is accepted and rejected into performing which identity or claims of belonging.

This panel invites papers that delve into sub-categories of African, Afropolitan and Afropean identities and belongings, particularly those that traverse survival and livelihood insecurities. These papers will define and elucidate the processes and conditions of risks, vulnerabilities, uncertainties, and livelihood insecurities. As well as, withdrawal, coping and survival strategies (self, collective and institutional).

Given the polysemantic, multidimensional nature of livelihood insecurities and their pervasive influence across society, we are particularly interested in papers that identify and address these sub-categories in the context of migration and diasporic living, rurality, conflict and post-conflict, labour, climate change, and the future.



## Performing and navigating “localness” in global Africa: the case of local workers in the field of international aid

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Anissa Maâ (Belgium) & Myfanwy James (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how “localness” is defined, performed, and negotiated in the professional field of international aid. We investigate the case of workers who are recruited for their presumed embeddedness in the field, amidst asymmetries related to citizenship, class, race, and gender.

### ABSTRACT

The field of international aid in Africa has been widely critiqued for a division of labour that reproduces global inequalities of citizenship, race, class, and gender. So-called “Aidland” is especially structured by a binary between the “local” and the “international” that grants employees from abroad with expatriate and senior positions, as well as with privileged living conditions, while national staff remain undervalued and face unequal security provision. At the same time, the labour force of international aid is more diverse than this neat binary suggests, and the notion of local remains fuzzy and poorly defined. In this panel, we explore how “localness” is constructed, performed, negotiated, or contested in the professional field of international aid, in sectors such as development, humanitarianism, migration management, or warfare. Beyond dichotomies, we invite contributions that examine categories, contracts, and rules that structure professional hierarchies, as well as the experiences and careers of those employed for their presumed embeddedness in the field. The panel is particularly interested in contributions that critically engage with the idea of “localness”, exploring how it is defined in relation – and in distinction – to that of the international, and how it is navigated in practice. We particularly invite papers on national staff, temporary brokers, or the ambivalent situation of African expatriates shedding light on the many ways localness intersects with citizenship, class, race, and gender. Methodological and ethical reflexions on the international division of knowledge production in academia and on the role of “local” research assistants are also welcomed.

## Population knowledge systems and the construction of difference

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Samantha Balaton-Chrimes (Australia) & Amanda Hammar (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel is interested in the ways in which national systems of population knowledge in Africa address difference. It seeks to examine a) the consequences of these systems for the construction of difference; and b) their epistemological underpinnings and the deeper effects thereof.

### ABSTRACT

This panel is interested in the ways in which national systems of population knowledge in Africa address difference, and their consequences.

Many African states are in the process of establishing digital and biometric population knowledge systems. While building upon and/or altering older systems of classification, these new technologies are promising to converge individual forms of identification, such as national ID cards and registers, with population-level systems such as the census. This constitutes a major shift in the way African states know – and construct – their people, affording new forms of measuring and managing both individual and group difference. This includes classifying people according to race, ethnicity, religion, language, or place of origin, (re)establishing distinctions between ‘native’ and ‘foreigner’.

The core questions driving this panel are:

- What national knowledge and identification systems are new and emerging, both at individual and population-level, and how are they interacting with each-other?
- What are the epistemological underpinnings and effects of these varied identification and knowledge practices, with respect to understandings and classifications of difference?
- What other former or co-existing knowledge systems – including non-state based – shape or contradict these emerging state-based systems, and with what effects?
- How are the emerging digital and biometric knowledge and population systems affecting lived experiences of identify difference and belonging, within and beyond the nation?

We are open to empirical and theoretical papers from all regions and all disciplines.

## Public Health, Space, and Belonging in Africa: Past and Present

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Caroline Meier zu Biesen (the Netherlands) & Laura-Elena Keck (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores the intersections between public health, space, and notions of belonging and citizenship on the African continent from an interdisciplinary perspective, offering historical, sociological and anthropological case studies from the 20th and 21st centuries.

### ABSTRACT

Health, disease, and concepts of identity, belonging, and also citizenship are closely linked to spatiality: Public health initiatives often shape and are shaped by perceptions of space, particularly in managing infectious diseases, where measures like border closures and quarantines are common. Non-infectious disease programs also operate with spatial categories, targeting at-risk areas for intervention. Public health efforts are often situated at the intersection of “global” and “local” visions of health interventions, navigating competing forms of knowledge.

This spatial conception of public health affects identity formation and exclusion in various ways. It can construct, reinforce, or disrupt identities and notions of citizenship: In colonial Africa, racial segregation was often justified as a public health measure, reinforcing racist categories and disrupting established neighbourhoods. More recently, measures against the Covid-19 pandemic have disrupted communal funeral traditions that are an essential expression of identity and social reproduction. But public health initiatives can also create new notions of belonging, for example in the context of community-based approaches at the height of HIV/AIDS, which fostered new senses of citizenship based on human dignity and social justice.

The panel offers an interdisciplinary approach, combining historical, sociological, and anthropological case studies from the 20th and 21st centuries. It asks how public health, space, belonging and citizenship intersect(ed) in different local settings in Africa, but also in a broader (trans-)national/-regional context, considering the globalization of public health and the impact of colonialism and decolonization.

## Reframing Social Policy for African Futures: Intersections with Identity, Belonging and Transnational Realities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Clement Chipenda (South Africa) & Emmanuel Ndhlovu (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel examines the evolving landscape of social policy in Africa which addresses challenges exacerbated by an interlocking crisis. It explores how countries are reframing social policies to respond to emergent needs and it advocates for inclusive social policy models from the Global South.

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the evolving landscape of social policy in Africa, offering an Africa-centred analysis of unprecedented challenges. These challenges span political, social, economic, and environmental domains, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and a volatile post-pandemic context characterised by an interlocking crises. Focusing on identity, belonging, and transnational dynamics, the panel seeks to highlight the need to align international social policy discourse with continental imperatives while challenging dominant Global North paradigms. It examines how African countries are reframing social policies to address the needs of increasingly diverse populations amid globalisation, shifting demographics, and a dynamic ecological landscape. Central to this exploration are paradigms emphasising universalism, solidarity, and transformative approaches that tackle structural inequalities and empower marginalised groups. The panel engages with a growing body of scholarship on social policy from the Global South advocating for inclusive models that go beyond narrow welfare approaches. Some of the topics which the panel engages with include: Afropolitan identities on urban social policies; the role of diaspora communities in shaping social policy; stakeholder dynamics and the balance between external influences and national ownership; the impact of digital technologies on social policy; informal economies and their implications for social policy; the decolonisation of social policy among others. The panel will also critically examine North-South power dynamics in social policy discourse, highlighting lessons learnt from the Global South. As it integrates interdisciplinary perspectives, the panel aims to reimagine social policy in Africa, reflecting the diverse expressions of African identities in developing inclusive and responsive policies.

## The challenges of compulsory education in African countries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** **Antónia Barreto** (Portugal) & **Clara Carvalho** (Portugal)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel aims to critically reflect on African education systems within the scope of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through case studies, exploratory studies, and theoretical reflections, we strive to discuss the challenges and potential solutions in African education.

### ABSTRACT

Educational legislation in African countries universally upholds the principles of free and compulsory education for children across different age groups. However, despite these commitments, significant challenges persist. While enrollment rates have risen in the 21st century compared to the 20th century, many children remain out of school, and issues such as high dropout and repetition rates are prevalent in certain areas.

Beyond these concerns, more profound structural challenges demand attention—ranging from the accessibility and affordability of education to shortages in physical and human resources, gender disparities, cultural barriers, and, most critically, the overall quality of education. These issues call for a comprehensive reflection on the efficacy and equity of African education systems.

In addressing these challenges, it is crucial to recognize the diverse contexts within which African education systems operate. Economic disparities, demographic pressure, regional conflicts, and rapid urbanization further complicate efforts to ensure equitable access to quality education. This panel will explore how education policies can align with local realities. We will consider how innovative approaches, community involvement, and international cooperation can play a pivotal role in shaping more resilient and inclusive education systems.

This panel seeks to critically examine the state of African education systems within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. Through case studies, exploratory research, and theoretical analysis, we aim to explore the key challenges facing education in African countries and examine practical, innovative solutions to improve outcomes that have been tested.

The rich and wealth in Africa. Theoretical approaches and empirical findings in the contemporary African, Afropean and Afropolitan world

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Florian Stoll (Germany) & Anja Osei (Germany)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The rich and wealth are a neglected topic in African Studies. This panel searches for empirical insights and conceptual approaches. It is open to all disciplines. Who are the rich and wealth in a globalized and digitalized world where African, Afropean and Afropolitan dimensions are intertwined?

### ABSTRACT

Who are the rich in Africa? This simple question requires clarifying many other aspects. Who self-identifies as rich and who is identified as rich in different contexts? Do financial criteria such as financial data about wealth and income offer better insights than other categorizations such as typical characteristics, ways of life or belonging to a certain family? Are the rich identical with functional elites in administration, business and other fields of African countries? How does being rich relate to symbolic positions such as being an elder or a church leader? What about multi-local individuals and those families whose members live partly in other countries and continents?

Particularly significant are the dimensions that the conference theme proposes: How are we supposed to imagine the rich in Africa if we take the categories African, Afropean and Afropolitan serious? Wealth has many sources and an advanced understanding of its significance can clarify substantial questions in an increasingly multi-local and digital world. From the owners of land and farms to other long-established forms of local wealth to the diasporic Africans in Europe, North America, and Asia to the globally mobile IT expert from one of the continent's metropolises, we find multiple sources and types of wealth and the rich. The rich are a significant but neglected topic in African Studies – there is little empirical knowledge and a thin conceptual foundation. We invite empirical and theoretical contributions from all disciplines that add to our understanding of wealth and the rich in Africa.

## Thinking While Black – Envisioning a Pan-African Future

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Sociology

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Palesa Nqambaza (United Kingdom) & Hlengiwe Ndlovu (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Exploring the revival of Pan-Africanism through cultural expression, this panel examines artistic movements reshaping African identity. Dr. Palesa Nqambaza, with Drs Hlengiwe Ndlovu, Refiloe Lepere, & Adebayo Sakiru, the panel highlights the political & social unities formed in creative spaces.

### ABSTRACT

The Pan-African vision, once seen as a cohesive project for continental unity, now faces challenges that threaten its coherence. Political tensions, state boundaries, and competing national interests often seem to pull the continent apart, leaving many to wonder whether the dream of Pan-Africanism has become fragmented beyond repair.

Yet, across Africa, a powerful cultural renaissance is unfolding—one that speaks directly to the heart of the Pan-African ideal. From the transcontinental sounds of Amapiano and Afrobeats to the growing influence of African theatre, literature, and performance, artists are creating new networks of connection that transcend borders. These cultural expressions reflect shared experiences, collective histories, and future aspirations.

This panel brings together a dynamic mix of scholars and creatives to investigate how artistic movements are not only rekindling cultural bonds across the African continent but also charting new paths for political and social unity. *Thinking While Black* aims to address gaps in contemporary discussions, focusing on the essence of Black consciousness in creative expression. It delves into the rise of bold, young, and intentional "oppositional cultures" across the diaspora, where art is being reimagined—from photography to the rejection of harmful systems that perpetuate inequality and imbalance, particularly across the global south.

We will seek to address the following questions:

- - When positioning Pan-Africanism as the foundation for pedagogy investigation, what elements from the colonial past are we inadvertently reproducing? What aspects of current thought are we critically destabilizing?
- - How do the emerging artistic movements across redefine contemporary African identity?

## Urban Studies

### African cities as testbeds: experimental statecraft in transition

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Biruk Terrefe (Germany) & Andrea Pollio (Italy)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

African cities are testbeds for policies & strategies that drive broader socio-economic transformation. This panel asks how and why these urban pilots - from megaprojects to administrative reform - serve as real-life models for national & transnational aspirations of statecraft.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel explores African cities as dynamic sites of experimental statecraft, where broader socio-economic transformations are trialled and refined. As testbeds for governance and development, cities provide a concentrated space where state actors, private stakeholders, and international partners pilot megaprojects, energy transitions, financial inclusion, industrial policy, governance innovation, and all kinds of other infrastructural reforms. These urban experiments not only reshape local landscapes but also serve as real-life models for national and transnational aspirations.

We aim to interrogate why and how the African city, which we intend both as a densely built environment and as an administrative configuration of subnational power, has become a key laboratory for statecraft in a moment of turbulent transitions (politically, geopolitically, environmentally, economically, etc.). African cities host, and are in themselves recast as, experiments that are meant to appraise or accelerate the exploration of future possibilities, whether these are political, economic, or even broader Afropolitan ambitions of worldmaking. Urban experiments also amplify the tangible effects of statecraft through aesthetic and symbolic means, engaging the lived experiences of residents who navigate evolving urban environments.

Our panel seeks to understand how urban spaces become critical to the construction of state power and, particularly, the ways in which experimental urbanism is linked to broader processes of social and political transformation. Why are African cities, with their unique histories, pilot sites for state innovations? We are keen to gather scholars working on specific projects or on broader trends in the experimentalization of statecraft through city building.



### African entanglements and transcontinental belonging: contested urban citizenship in Europe and the Horn of Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Tom Goodfellow (United Kingdom) & Abdifatah Tahir (Somalia)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the dynamics of transnational belonging among Horn of Africa diaspora in European cities. We explore how the precarious urban citizenship that is claimed or denied to African migrants in Europe is shaped by their transcontinental investments & political engagements, & vice versa.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel will explore the precarious urban citizenship experienced by communities from the Horn of Africa in European cities who maintain transnational connections with their places of origin. Studies of urban citizenship examine how cities can challenge, subvert, or reinforce state-based exclusion regimes, with a focus on the challenges African migrants face as racial and religious 'others' within post-colonial power dynamics and global hierarchies. At the same time, studies of diasporic belonging explore the constrained yet significant agency African communities in Europe have on shaping the development trajectories of their home countries. Again, these transcontinental connections are at least partially determined by postcolonial social polarizations and the socio-cultural and politico-economic dominance of Europe over Africa. For the Horn of Africa particularly, the longstanding but arguably intensifying 'regional insecurity complex', renders these dynamics of migration, remittances and transnational engagement all the more significant. This panel will bridge the gap between these related but parallel debates. It will bring transnational connections to bear on urban belonging and vice versa. We will ask in what ways is the 'urban citizenship' - which is claimed, seized or denied to African migrants in Europe - shaped by their transcontinental investments and political engagements?; how do these dynamics differ between genders and generations?; what are the reciprocal relationships between urban (un)belonging in Europe and the development trajectories of the African cities of origin?; and what do these connections imply for breaking down local/international policy silos?

## African Literary Cities – re-imagining literary place-making through Southern urbanism

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Culture and Language

**ORGANISERS:** Laura Nkula (South Africa) & Polo Moji (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel engages with different instantiations of ‘literariness’ as place-making in African cities. It speaks back to the emerging scholarly field of Literary Urban Studies, adding uniquely Afropolitan perspectives that are, to date, still amiss.

### ABSTRACT

Located at the intersection of urban and literary studies, Literary Urban Studies bring “cityness” into conversation with *literariness* (“literariness”, defined by Jakobson (1963) as metalinguistic traits that distinguish literary texts from other forms of discourse (genres, tropes etc). From the vantage point of urban studies, a focus on the literary is a welcome counterpoint in a field whose interdisciplinarity, especially in the African context, has not been able to tap much into the rich conceptual and methodological humanities repertoire. Bar a few remarkable exceptions (e.g., Quayson 2014), the ways in which the African city is engaged with and imagined in different literary spaces remain vastly underexplored. By the same token, African urban studies have rarely turned towards the continent’s rich literary space as an important realm to think more deeply about how everyday urban life is experienced and navigated. In light of this, this panel is looking to open an interdisciplinary conversation by showcasing scholarship that explores the nexus between the literary and the urban in Africa, e.g. through focusing on specific authors, cities (big and small), literary forms or cultural infrastructures (e.g. libraries, literary festivals, imprints, writing circles). To develop Literary Urban Studies from the perspective of Southern urbanism and vice versa, we welcome contributions by both urban and literary scholars, as well as practitioners that reflect on literary place-making on the continent and amongst its diasporas.

### Belonging to the frontier? Capital and the future on Africa's new urban peripheries

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Peter Lockwood (United Kingdom) & Hannah Elliott (Denmark)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores the rapid 'peripheralisation' of Africa's new urban outskirts through interdisciplinary empirical reflection upon the social and economic strategies used to (re)constitute belonging to these landscapes.

#### ABSTRACT

Across the African continent, the growth of major cities has dramatically transformed rural hinterlands into peri-urban peripheries. Brought about by new infrastructure projects, especially roadbuilding, new urban landscapes have emerged around road-corridors and planned cities that have brought an influx of capital to these spaces, giving rise to new forms of socio-economic stratification, while offering new opportunities and exclusions for its residents. While some are speculating or 'autoconstructing' on their own land, becoming landlords in their own right, others are displaced by the market, selling-up their plots and moving elsewhere. This panel explores these fragmentary processes of commodification, assetization and displacement typical of the Africa's new urban peripheries, inviting reflections from across the social sciences to generate discussion about their consequences for social relations, class formation, and modes of belonging to place. In such transient spaces, how do urban residents seek to belong to an inherently unstable 'frontier'? How is the frontier exploited as a site of opportunity (in terms of rent and land sale), and how does the ability to seize these opportunities turn upon access to capital (land, finance, social networks)? How does market-based displacement and land speculation shape senses of belonging? How is urban space itself reconfigured on these peripheries?

In asking these questions, this panel responds to the conference's focus on 'the political and cultural economy of late capitalism', its 'radical environmental changes and dangers' and how these shape 'the frontiers of contestation over identity and belonging' comparatively, across Africa's new urban peripheries.

## Claim-making and Energy Citizenship

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Liza Rose Cirolia (South Africa) & Karen Waltorp (Denmark)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores energy, and specifically electricity, as a site for negotiating and substantiating citizenship in South African cities. The panel centres and advances questions emerging from the “CLAIMS to Energy Citizenship” research project (Universities of Cape Town and Copenhagen).

### ABSTRACT

This panel explores energy, and specifically electricity, as a site for negotiating and substantiating citizenship in South African cities. The panel centres and advances questions emerging from the early stages of the “CLAIMS to Energy Citizenship” research project - a partnership between the Universities of Cape Town and Copenhagen.

In the context of complex technological transitions in the energy landscape both locally and globally, the claim-making/citizenship nexus offers an entry point to explore politics, technologies, situatedness, and state-practice. We are particularly interested in understanding claim-making from diverse perspectives: (vernacular) archives, temporalities, and urban geographies. Further, we are keen to explore how states, particularly city authorities, engage with different registers and modalities of claims, and to trace the tools of governmentality that this gives rise to.

Some of the questions we hope to address include: How are different types and modes of claims to energy citizenship articulated and legitimated, and by whom? How and why are claims and claim-making processes documented, archived, or erased? How are claims taken up within the frame of the developmental imperative to expand energy access, and how are they reshaped, hijacked, or mis-/appropriated? How do claims by the state and citizens to- and about energy -illustrate both unresolved and new debates about modes of being and belonging? And how do these interface with questions around history, culture, politics, economy, social formation and the environment?

We draw on the context of Cape Town and invite conceptual, empirical, and methodological contributions related to claim-making, energy, and African cities.

### Envisioning Africa's Urban Future(s) post-2030: What Comes After the Sustainable Development Goals? [African Urban Dynamics CRG]

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Stephen Marr (Sweden) & Jennifer Hart (United States)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

As the deadline nears for the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, this forward-looking panel invites interdisciplinary proposals that explore what urban development might look like after 2030, both from the grounded perspectives of African urban residents and policymakers.

#### ABSTRACT

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals have dominated international development programs and policy debates over the last decade. Even so, critics continue to raise fundamental questions about the meaning of “sustainability”, the origins of these definitions, and the power imbalances they imply. SDG 11 (“Sustainable Cities and Communities”) encompassing factors such as housing, infrastructure, health, and urban justice and equity has not been exempted from the aforementioned concerns. Though widely embraced by urban planners and policymakers on the Continent, they have been critiqued for their universalizing approach and reliance on tired tropes about African cities that perpetuate problematic dichotomies about African urban life (e.g. the formal vs. informal divide).

In response to these tensions, this forward-looking panel invites interdisciplinary proposals that explore what urban development might look like after 2030, both from the grounded perspectives of African urban residents and policymakers. Questions to be addressed include: How might urban development advance urban justice in African cities? How might we reframe urban development policy and practice from the experiences and expertise of African urban residents? In an era of escalating global and local insecurities and crises that profoundly destabilize lives and livelihoods for urban residents and institutions, what does “urban development” even mean? Or what can it achieve? The panel organizers especially welcome proposals that are both empirically grounded and theoretically speculative. We are particularly interested in hearing from younger scholars who will be shaping the future of African urban scholarship.

## Five Decades of African “Informality”: Moving on from a Conceptual Zombie and What Comes Next?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Decoloniality & Knowledge Production

**ORGANISERS:** Stephen Marr (Sweden) & Martin Murray (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Five decades on from Keith Hart's (1973) coining of the term, this panel invites an assessment of the long-term viability of “informality” as an analytical rubric. And if not “informality,” what might replace it to better capture the complexities of contemporary urban life in Africa and beyond.

### ABSTRACT

Since Keith Hart first coined the term in 1973, the concept of “informality” has remained both a dominant and controversial lens through which to understand lives and economies across urban Africa. Though widespread in its use and application, “informality’s” meaning remains elusive, shape-shifting to fit changing livelihood, spatial, or institutional dynamics. Once confined to the twin fields of unauthorized housing and unregulated economic activities, the informal/informality has been reinvented as embedded in the everyday lives of those occupying the socio-economic and spatial margins. Initially thought of as denoting illicit, underground, and perhaps illegal activities, some scholars have reinvented informality as a mode of regulation. More recent iterations, meanwhile, conceive informality as entangled with formal institutions, rather than existing in opposition to them. Such shifts in focus have been accompanied by a recognition that informality does not just occur on urban peripheries, but is practiced by the urban elites as well.

Therefore, as a descriptive marker, informality plays a powerful role in identifying processes at work on the ground. However, “informality” remains beset by conceptual contortions that limit both its utility and explanatory power. This panel thus serves as an invitation to assess the long-term viability of “informality” as an analytical rubric. And if not “informality,” what might replace it to better capture the complexities and ambiguities of contemporary urban life. The panel thus adopts an interdisciplinary perspective and welcomes theoretically engaged and / or empirically grounded paper proposals from across a range of settings and temporalities.

### History, Culture, and Place Identity in Housing in African Cities: Shaping African Belongings

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Esther Thontheh (Nigeria) & Joy Obadoba (Nigeria)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Migration to cities often reshapes urban landscapes, intertwining historical, cultural, and identity-based influences in housing designs and land use. This panel examines indigenous, colonial, and contemporary impacts on architecture and social structures to foster more inclusive, resonant cities.

#### ABSTRACT

The migration to cities has reshaped urban landscapes, impacting both migrants and indigenous populations. While cities are often seen as rapidly modernising, they are deeply rooted in historical narratives, cultural practices, and unique identities. This panel explores the influence of history, culture, and place identity on housing designs and land use in African cities. Case studies from various regions will reveal how precolonial, colonial, traditional, and contemporary influences shape urban neighbourhoods and housing policies. The key themes in the panel will include: the role of indigenous architectural forms and spatial practices in preserving cultural identity; the impact of colonial and postcolonial urban planning on social stratification and housing distribution; and the emerging Afropolitan and Afropean expressions of belonging that challenge conventional notions of space and identity. Through an interdisciplinary approach, including urban studies, history, cultural studies, music, arts, architecture, and more disciplines, the panel aims to discuss how these factors contribute to the ongoing negotiation of identity and belonging in African cities. The goal is to highlight how housing policies and urban development strategies can create more inclusive and culturally resonant urban environments.

## Just Urban Transitions: Governance and Citizenship in African Cities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Margot Rubin (United Kingdom) & Fiona Anciano (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

With a focus on infrastructure/s, this panel seeks to delve into and challenge the idea of just urban transitions, asking speakers to carefully examine assumptions of (in)justice and (in)equity in African cities.

### ABSTRACT

There is general acknowledgement that the climate crisis is the overwhelming concern of our age and that it is imperative that countries and cities shift towards low-carbon economies, climate resilience and reduced resource consumption, whilst prioritising the needs and aspirations of low-income communities in ways that directly tackle global and domestic inequalities (Culwick Fatti et al, 2023). A number of governments, communities and individuals have taken this clarion call seriously and are experimenting with policies, infrastructure and social projects to ensure a just transition. However, it has also been broadly acknowledged that this transition is not without challenges, most particularly the implications for low income, vulnerable and marginalised, “climate precarious” (Rice et al 2022) individuals and communities. In African cities, many citizens do not have access to gridded infrastructure and adopt numerous strategies of "making do", DIY and "hacking" the urban to get by. Using the lens of infrastructure (in its broadest sense), raises a series of questions: what does a just urban transition mean for governance in contexts in which there is already significant inequity and hybridisation of provision and access? As such, this panel seeks to engage, explore and challenge the idea of "Just Transitions" by asking a series of questions about who or what is the transition for and who makes it happen and how, and who pays the price?



## Large-scale infrastructure projects and everyday life in urban Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Ilda Lindell (Sweden) & Colman Msoka (Tanzania)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Large-scale infrastructure projects are transforming African cities. Ordinary citizens may repurpose them for a variety of purposes, turning them into major sites of interaction and contestation. This panel addresses how these new infrastructures intersect with highly diverse everyday practices.

### ABSTRACT

Large-scale infrastructure projects are transforming spaces, possibilities and imaginaries in urban Africa. Brought into being through transnational flows of finance, expertise and labour, they are expected to reinvent and re-position African cities globally. Both material and semiotic objects, such infrastructures reflect particular visions of modernity and shape individual subjectivities and aspirations. Not seldom, however, they are built with limited consideration for pre-existing modes of urban life and livelihood. New roads, for example, may traverse very diverse spaces and populations, and may preclude, displace or ban certain activities and groups. But the new infrastructures may intersect with vernacular forms and practices in variegated ways and generate diverse feelings of belonging and exclusion. Moreover, ordinary citizens may position and (re)insert themselves into these infrastructures, repurposing and adapting them to their everyday needs. Through their practices, they may navigate juxtaposed modern and vernacular life-worlds, and negotiate the in-between spaces of the splintering city. Large-scale infrastructures often become sites of intense interaction and contestation, resulting from the encounter between diverse everyday practices, between policing and subversion, between construction workers of different nationalities and backgrounds, etc. Relations of race, ethnicity, gender, social class and coloniality may shape the frictions and socialities emerging in these sites.

This panel explores the multifaceted spaces of encounter emerging at the intersection between large-scale urban infrastructures and everyday practices. It also wants to examine the highly diverse ways in which such large projects (transport or other infrastructures) become embedded in different urban contexts and transformed by local practices.

### Learning from elsewhere: The African lives of global urban models

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Allen Xiao (Singapore) & Alexis Sebarenzi (Rwanda)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Through worlding Afropolitan and Afropean experiences, African cities have been the recipient for a myriad of global urban models. This panel aims to understand the multifaceted ways in which urban models are renegotiated when they land in African cities both by policy makers and city dwellers.

#### ABSTRACT

Through worlding Afropolitan and Afropean experiences, African cities have been the recipient for a myriad of global urban models (smart, green, sustainable, frugal, 15-minute, compact etc.). At the same time, urban Africa has undergone a significant transformation of infrastructure and environment as well as lived experiences and lifestyles. African urban planners and policy makers have been eager to envision elsewhere in a bid to rebrand their home cities. Such practice of urban modeling is not duplicating a universal urban model but learning from various experiences across the Global South and the Global East. In the process, Afropolitanism and African futurism are largely “worlded” through situated everyday practices, relationally drawing from other cities. This panel calls for a deeper understanding of multifaceted ways in which urban models, when landing in African cities, are reconfigured and renegotiated both by policy makers and city dwellers. Specifically, we welcome prospective panelists addressing the following questions:

1. How do African cities and/or Afropolitans create alternative global connections and regimes of value that differ from the colonial past?
2. How do South-South connections and exchanges reshape African urban experiences?
3. How does intra-African urban policy mobility reconfigure relational urban modeling practices?
4. How do African cities and/or Afropolitans pursue mass, worldly dreams instead of taking imposed visions?

### Living African urban peripheries: social infrastructures and spatial connections

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Sarah Charlton (South Africa) & Paula Meth (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel focuses on African peripheries: the social, economic and cultural infrastructure that sustain or undermine lives, & the relationships between peripheral areas and multiple 'elsewheres' (urban & non-urban). We call for continent-wide papers enriching understanding of diverse peripheries.

#### ABSTRACT

Spaces on the edges of African cities are studied from different perspectives. Their diversity and complexity is increasingly apparent, reflecting multiple different processes and trends. While peripheral areas may reflect growth and development, they can also be places of stagnation and even economic and population decline. In recent years these varying characters, their histories and current influences have attracted empirical investigation and conceptual categorisation, including Meth et al's five 'logics' of peripheries (Meth et al 2024). Yet despite this renewed interest and increasing recognition of the significance as well as dynamism of peripheral areas, there is much still to understand. Deeper insight is needed into the lives and priorities of residents, including particular demographic cohorts such as youth and their experience of these areas as boring (Mukwede, 2018) or alternatively tranquil. This panel focuses on two dimensions of African urban peripheries: 1) the social, economic and cultural infrastructures, practices and resources that sustain or undermine life within particular edge-localities, and within particular age and life-stage cohorts (see for example Asafo 2015); 2) the social, economic and physical relationships between peripheral areas and multiple 'elsewheres': urban core areas, urban satellites and non-urban hinterlands (see for example Mercer, 2024; Buire, 2014; Bank 2015, Ejigu, 2012). In this panel we hope to attract papers from across the continent to build further understanding of the lived experiences within urban peripheries as well as the ways in which peripheral life reaches - or insulates - across geographic space.

### Looking inside decentralization as a political process: how does belonging shape city-making?

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Lena Gutheil (Germany) & Alain Antil (France)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel addresses the intersections of urban governance and decentralization reforms in Africa. It will assess how belonging to elite, economic, party or social networks can structure power and affect citizens' access to services, infrastructure and participation in city-making.

#### ABSTRACT

In international policy fora on Africa's urbanization, decentralization is often presented as solution for effective urban governance, driven by local decision-makers.

Decentralization policies aim at shifting competencies and resources from the central government to territorially defined subnational levels, including cities and municipalities. The conceptualization and implementation of decentralization reforms are inherently political and contested as the negotiation of access to power and resources creates winners and losers. At the city level, the competition for power is particularly dense as diverse actors situated at different levels, such as central and local administrators, politicians, traditional authorities, civil society organisations and the private sector all have an interest in influencing decision-making related to urban governance. In this process, actors use different channels for accessing power that might transcend their own localities: elite, economic, party or ethnic networks can be leveraged to determine favourable outcomes for one's own group.

Instead of looking at decentralization as an ontological state, the panel conceptualizes decentralization as a political project that consists of episodes of de- and recentralisation. Looking inside the negotiation of these reform episodes in the African context, the panel asks how belonging to elite, economic, party or ethnic networks structures access to power and affects citizens' access to services, infrastructure and participation in city-making. The panel invites empirical case studies as well as theoretical papers that explore the use of belonging to partake in decision-making and the mobilization of related social, economic or political resources to access urban services.

### Mobile urban lives – migration, displacement, and belonging

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Raffael Beier (Germany) & Els Keunen (Germany)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The panel explores shifting housing provisions for, experiences and strategies of mobile populations, incl. migrants and internally displaced persons. How do their experiences and aspirations shape housing pathways and their sense of belonging?

#### ABSTRACT

This panel explores the nexus between mobile populations in African cities, the provisional or shifting nature of their urban dwellings, and their sense of belonging. With ‘mobile populations’ - a major factor of African demographics - we allude to various migrants and displaced persons, who travel or are forced to move to and/or between different places within and beyond urban areas. In their search for urban housing, mobile populations are potentially affected by limited access to urban networks and financial resources, as well as discrimination and xenophobia. These aspects may reduce their housing options in the city, building housing experiences that may be characterized by high volatility, provisionality, but also desire and hope. Housing pathways are shaped by the agency of mobile populations, their housing aspirations and ambitions to a secure urban life, but are also affected by temporary rental agreements, landlord-tenant conflicts, evictions and intra-urban displacements and resettlement. Under such volatile and shifting conditions, we aim at putting focus on questions of place-making and belonging. How do housing experiences and aspirations shape housing pathways of mobile populations and their sense of belonging in the city?

We welcome contributions that include but are not limited to:

- Access to various forms of housing for mobile populations
- Housing experiences and trajectories of mobile populations in urban areas
- Aspiration and agency of mobile population in shaping their housing pathways and placemaking
- The influence of intra-urban evictions and displacements on sense of belonging
- Longitudinal analyses of housing and mobile (urban) lives

### Political urbanities in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Marianne Morange (France) & Aurélie Quentin (France)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

As city-living is becoming the prevailing social and political condition in Africa, the relationship to the political and social order is largely filtered through urban life. This panel explores empirically the construction of political subjectivities through ordinary everyday urban experience.

#### ABSTRACT

City-living is on the verge of becoming the prevailing social and political condition in Africa and the way people relate to the political and social order is now largely filtered through urban life. However, these processes have attracted less attention, among urban scholars, than political mobilizations and institutionalized forms of collective political action (political parties, associations, unions, street parliaments, etc.). Politicisation constitutes indeed a very important component of the urbanisation/democratisation nexus in Africa. However, as Michel Foucault argued, the construction of the political subject also takes place through everyday ordinary social practices. They shape and reflect the subject's relationship to the political and social urban order, what we refer to as "political urbanities". It is a research path that we are exploring ourselves in an ongoing research programme (URBAPOL) by looking at how the increasingly shared experience of becoming a homeowner impacts political subjectivities in Cape Town (South Africa) and Mombasa (Kenya). This panel seeks to engage in a discussion with scholars who also question the complex and ambiguous political meanings of the many facets of urban life in African cities. Their contributions will explore, through concrete empirical case studies, the construction of political subjectivities through ordinary and everyday urban life, be they consumption habits, urban mobility, working experience, practices and forms of socialization, leisure activities .... By unravelling the way everyday urban life shapes political subjectivities in Africa, we also seek to highlight the contribution of African studies to Foucauldian approaches in urban studies.

### Strategies to secure belonging, material improvements and citizenship in the changing policy contexts of African cities

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Smith Ouma (United Kingdom) & George Masimba Nyama (Zimbabwe)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel will draw on studies of marginalized disadvantaged groups in African cities to provide insights into how informal settlements are being understood, and alternative development options created. It will consider diverse approaches to changing identity and relational politics.

#### ABSTRACT

Africa is urbanizing rapidly but, at least in the major cities, there are few opportunities for access to affordable formal housing, secure tenure and essential services. At present, 56 per cent of Africa's urban population is living in informal neighbourhoods; and numbers are going to increase. While the policy context is more favourable than ten years ago (Ouma et al 2024), there are few substantive programmes to address needs that are taking place at scale. What is being provided, in terms of improved infrastructure and services, are market-based approaches without due regard to the inclusion of the lowest income households.

In the absence of convincing and coherent state-led approaches to inclusive urban development, organized informal settlement organizations are working with a range of professional and political elites through both visible reform coalitions and less visible negotiations with elites to define new development options and challenge their subaltern status. These efforts are taking place at multiple scales from the street to the city. This panel will bring together politically informed analyses on how residents are claiming rights, entitlements, and presence, and in so doing re-defining urban citizenship. It will examine residents' efforts at influencing policy and action at the national and city levels while assessing their varying levels of success across African cities.

## Sustainable wastewater challenges in urban Africa: social and material entanglements and constructions

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Sustainability

**ORGANISERS:** Paul Stacey (Denmark) & Richard J. Grant (United States)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel investigates how African government's solutions are influenced by global north paradigms, and how, in the process, context specific struggles and opportunities are created that challenge and change local politics and social organization.

### ABSTRACT

Urban Africa faces no shortage of challenges related to wastewater governance. Similarly, there is no shortage of developmental plans, typically influenced by Global north trajectories, of how to solve the critical infrastructural shortcomings. Such designs include 'travelling models', 'developmental paradigms' and 'one size fits all' processes. These endeavor to upend embedded and opposing political economies, improve 'ineffective' political organization, and subsequently affect local political contexts of opportunity, struggle, and power. For better and worse, the envisaged and implemented 'solutions' challenge and change power relations and produce and reshape discourses and understandings of progress. In this optic, both envisaged and implemented infrastructural projects with ideas of improved public service provision produce and reshape institutional developmental trajectories whilst cutting off others. Existing options are bartered as new opportunities are garnered and as new challenges arise. Accordingly, this panel welcomes critical perspectives from anthropology, political economy, urban geography, and political ecology on processes of wastewater governance in urban Africa, which explore ambiguities of increasing Global north and Global south interconnectedness, and the implications and consequences for government institutions and the urban citizenry. Conceptually, the panel seeks to address how such entanglements and ambiguities impinge on urban citizenship and sense of belonging, together with local experiences of recognition, representation, and accountability. Institutionally, the panel is interested in how the production of new knowledge, discourses of betterment, socio-tech transitions, and the making of global partnerships impact the legitimacy, effectiveness, politics, and governance of the urban local governments mandated to manage wastewater sustainably.



## Transnationalism and Hybrid Cultures: A Look at Lagos and Her Diasporas

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Abisoye Eleshin (Nigeria) & Taibat Lawanson (United Kingdom)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The cosmopolitan outlook of Lagos, Nigeria has continued to facilitate constant connections with other nationalities within and beyond the African continent. Epistemologies around diverse form of flows and exchanges between Lagos and her diasporas will form key engagements of this study.

### ABSTRACT

Lagos is a multicultural and cosmopolitan urban centre and melting pot for both indigenous and hybridized knowledge expressions. Identified historical connections with Salvador Bahia, Brazil, and Freetown, Sierra Leone has resulted in Lagos indigenous sub-groups like the *Aguda* and *Saro*. Lagos' status as a port city also resulted in extensive historic and contemporary economic linkages with other port cities such as Liverpool, Portugal to name a few. These transnational connections have played a key role in the dynamism of Lagos as a city, especially in terms of flows and exchanges of people, resources, cultures and identities.

This panel seeks to engage conversation around identities, privileges and knowledge production trajectories that have emerged because of the links between Lagos and diasporic connections. The session welcomes papers that engage with the idiosyncrasies of praxes relating to the transfer and emergence of new languages, socio-economic profiles, urban patterns, cultural appropriations and modes of being and belonging of and with Lagos.

The debate will be structured towards understanding the transnational epistemologies of Lagos and her Diasporas, including migrant communities within Lagos as well as Lagos communities in the Diaspora.

## Urban contestation and belonging: activism inside and outside the (local) State

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Sylvia Croese (United States) & Chloé Buire (France)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel questions how the centralization of urban politics is being contested and how inclusive forms of urban belonging are being claimed in African cities. Through ethnographic and transnational case-studies, we aim to contribute to a redefinition of activism both inside and outside the State.

### ABSTRACT

Many African regimes can be described as highly centralized or even autocratic and have used their far reaching legal powers to maintain or regain political control over the continent's growing cities. Although the Arab Spring of 2011 boosted a literature on popular politics and bottom-up resistance, the various ways in which city governments and their leaders have been contested remain largely overlooked. This panel invites contributions that examine how urban dwellers, but also local officials at various levels of city administrations, have sought to call for the democratization of urban government in order to secure more inclusive ways of urban belonging. Beyond the established focus on 'street politics', what other spaces are used to contest the centralization of urban politics? Contributions could focus on strategies such as recourses to judiciary powers, social media campaigns, citizen-led monitoring of city budget and expenditure, or local electoral observation. We also welcome analyses of the discourses and debates that are used and produced in the process and the (local, international or diasporic) actors involved in supporting such initiatives. Transnational case studies could help to identify how these forms of claim making have (or have not) found ways to connect across different city spaces within and beyond Africa. Last, but not least, we invite theoretical reflections on the distinction / articulation between social movements and bureaucratic or governmental activism within local municipalities. Taken together, these contributions will eventually question activism both inside and outside the (local) State.

### Urban Future Making: Arts, Ethics, and Epistemics in Africa's Mobile Cityscapes

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Afropolitanism and Afropean Belongings

**ORGANISERS:** Loren Landau (South Africa) & Caroline Wanjiku Kihato (United Kingdom)

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel explores how people in uncertain and mobile cities shape futures & spaces around them. Through art, music, poetry, and sociological data, it reflects on how to read and represent community, political authority, and the socio-temporality of membership amidst Africa's urban revolution.

#### ABSTRACT

This panel explores how people in fragmented, uncertain, and mobile cities are shaping their futures and the spaces around them. Through art, music, stories, poems, and data, it reflects on cities, movements, and knowledge generation. At its heart, the panel considers the bases of community, political authority, and membership in spaces undergoing dramatic transformation and churn. However uncertain, these spaces are generating novel socialities, subjectivities, and forms of power and authority that will shape urban life in the decades ahead. As these cities become more populous, youthful, and multi-scalar than ever, they demand novel epistemic and ethical frameworks to make sense of their changing morphology and productive potential. Dissatisfied with developmental or sociological frameworks for studying urban marginality and space making, the panel's papers instead exploit the intersections of social science and the visual arts. This interdisciplinarity offers insight into the city and how mobility shapes urban space and the geographic and temporal scales of belonging. Through art, music, story, poems, and data, the panel reflects on ways to capture and reflect the urban imaginations, entanglements, values and aspirations. Doing so shifts the epistemic lens from the census to the senses: from the demographic and developmental to an approach foregrounding the subjective and agential. Rather than accounts intended to delimit debates, the panel evokes embodied experiences of the material. It dialogically challenges conventional modes of representing African migration and urban socio-politics.

## Urban Sprawl and Spatial Identity of Indigenous Peri-Urban Communities in Africa

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Identity and Cultural Politics

**ORGANISERS:** Samson Olanrewaju (Nigeria) & Esther Thontteh (Nigeria)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

The session will probe into the manifestation and impact of urban sprawl on the spatial identity of indigenous peri-urban settlements in Africa.

### ABSTRACT

Africa is urbanising at an unprecedented rate with a unique dimension and dynamics that require urban management interventions. One of such dimension is the diffusion and sprawling of cities into adjoining peri-urban areas which have implications on the right to land, land use arrangement, and spatial and communal identities. Spatial identity results from the psychological connection process between people, physical places, and associated activities. Sprawling of African urban areas into adjoining settlements informs land redistribution which not only redefines but threatens society and places relationships. Addressing this challenge, the session will probe into the manifestation and impact of urban sprawl on the spatial identity of indigenous peri-urban settlements in Africa. It will specifically question the impact of urbanization on the relative position of these settlements - along the borderlines. Landuse change and structural changes in the pattern of the settlements will also be assessed. The impact of peri-urbanisation on place attachment, land rights, and land use will also be questioned. The implication of these on the spatio-cultural identity of the peri-urban areas will be evaluated. The outcomes of this session are expected to provide pathways for integrating local identities, cultures, and institutional transformations to advance urban justice and sustainable development.

## Waiting to belong – African youth negotiating identity, space and place

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Inequality

**ORGANISERS:** Alicia Fortuin (South Africa) & Tinashe Kanosvamhira (South Africa)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

This panel seeks to engage research on the relationship between identity, belonging, and the built environment. We seek to understand the intersectional dynamics of affordability, accessibility of various forms of capital, labour and space of youth in African cities as they become adults.

### ABSTRACT

Youth transitions on the African continent have typically been understood as hustling (Thieme, 2018) straining (Oldfield and Finn, 2015), and further described as waithood (Honwana, 2012), and more recently as transformative (Botrell and Pessoa, 2019) waithood. This panel seeks to unpack the intersectionality of *becoming* for youth on the African continent, specifically focussing on youth who are educated at a tertiary level. Not much has been written or understood of African youth who are educated as they too negotiate spatial and social inequalities, thinning resources, digital divides and as more jobs become elusive in the formal economy. Scholars writing from the Zimbabwean context have started to investigate the relationship between social mobility, education and the informal economy as it relates to increasingly unemployed and underemployed university graduates (Pikovskaia, 2024). Following on from this important trajectory in urban African youth scholarship, this panel seeks to engage discussions and share research and insights on the relationship between identity, belonging, and the built environment through demonstrating and placing emphasis on understanding the fullness of the trials and tribulations as well as the tiny empowerments (Sandercock, 2003) and victories young people encounter as they transition from youth to adulthood, university to work and from their parents' or family homes to their own homes, however temporary. Our aim is to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the historical legacies of structural inequality alongside the everyday, deliberate, routine agentic practices, networks and identities of young people as they negotiate their place in society.

## When disaster meets ‘informality’: Navigating Disaster Risk Creation in Africa’s Rapid Urbanization processes

**DISCIPLINARY STREAM:** Urban Studies

**THEMATIC STREAM:** Infrastructure

**ORGANISERS:** Beatrice Hati Gitundu (Kenya) & Rodrigo Mena Fluhmann (the Netherlands)

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Africa’s rapidly urbanizing cities face increased disaster risk, often attributed to informal practices and settlements. Nuancing this discourse, this panel explores how (in)formality shapes disaster risk creation, inviting contributions from researchers, practitioners, and grassroots actors.

### ABSTRACT

Disaster risk management in Africa often hinges on Western blueprints that don't always fit the local socio-political realities and the defining forms of urban development in the region. The dynamic manifestations of the spatial, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical fabrics demonstrate that Urban Africa is predominantly ‘informal’. Evidence substantiates an 85.8% share in informal employment, a 60% share in informal housing, and diverse organic social arrangements particularly leveraged by marginalized groups. Informality is a key part of the region’s identity, yet it is often overlooked in formal disaster management. The chance to explore informality-sensitive solutions to disaster risks is underutilized. What challenges and opportunities arise where widespread informality meets growing disaster risk?

To address this overlooked issue, the panel examines how urbanization, in its formal framing, can contribute to disaster risk creation (DRC). It invites a dialogue for traditional disaster management strategies to adapt, recognize and accept the role of informality in many African (and elsewhere) cities and communities. With Africa being the world’s fastest urbanizing region, informality will likely be continually weaved into the continent’s urban futures. It is crucial to explore how informal practices actively complement or shape disaster risk management. In this discursive space, formal practices are not demonized nor are informal practices romanticized, rather they are both critically discussed. The panel positions the formality-informality landscape as a liminal space, where dynamic boundaries to what is (in)formal exist.