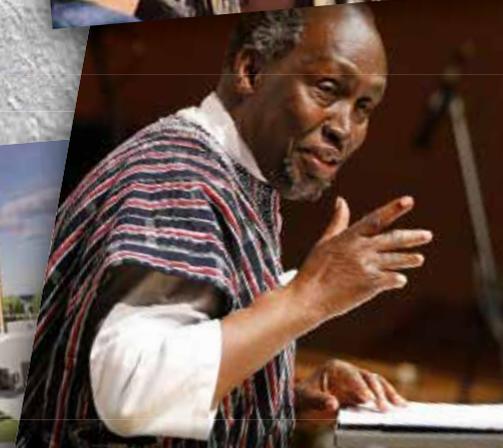
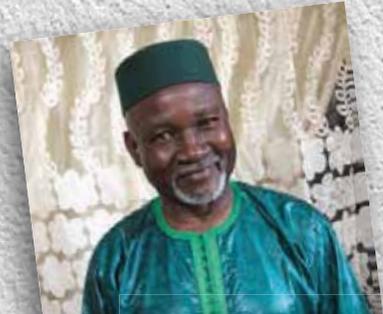


NAB



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

30th ANNIVERSARY



Institute of African Studies Bayreuth

30th Anniversary of the IAS / Honouring Ulrike Wanitzek / An EIMASter's Journey

Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence

Cluster Events / African Cluster Centres: Activities 2020 / Research Projects / African Studies Around the Globe

Iwalewahaus

Mbongeni Buthelezi – Art Meets Science / From Osogbo to Bayreuth and back / Sommer Labor

Dear reader,

Just like for everyone around the globe, the year of 2020 has been a challenging one for Bayreuth and the Institute of African Studies (IAS). In the introduction of last year's issue, the new editorial team of the *News from the Institute of African Studies at the University of Bayreuth (NAB)* had already appeared in Zoom tiles foreshadowing a new momentum for digitization, which in 2020 tremendously affected the IAS as well as our Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. As it stands, digital has become the new normal, posing various challenges for academic exchange and research, but also making intercontinental meetings easy to facilitate and attend.

Despite the global pandemic, African Studies in Bayreuth has been going strong with a variety of innovative collaborative research projects and academic co-operations – albeit more in digital formats than through personal contact – and we are delighted to provide an overview of all of our activities in this edition of NAB 2020.



Times of crisis often cause introspection and self-reflection, so we are very happy to mark an anniversary *pro domo*, i.e., the history of 30 years of the IAS. In this issue of NAB, we invite the reader on a stroll down the impressive path of three decades: We took stock of the Institute's status quo and asked several key protagonists who played a role in establishing the IAS to share their memories and appreciation of the Institute's work.

We would very much like to thank them as well as all of our other contributors, and hope for all of our sakes that next year's NAB will see more reports on personal interactions and face-to-face encounters.

Enjoy the read.

NAB Editorial Team

Sabine Greiner, Doris Löhr, Ivo Ritzer & Irina Turner

Welcome!



Cyrus Samimi



Eva Spies



Rüdiger Seesemann



Ute Fendler

A year ago, when the last NAB was published, we were at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had just started to make its impact felt. At the time we did not expect that one year later the pandemic would affect us even more than before. In December 2020 and March 2021 we were mourning the passing of two long-time IAS associates who succumbed to COVID-19. The first, Dr. Salabary Doumbia, was a frequent visitor to the IAS who received his PhD from the University of Bayreuth as early as 1988. His last visit was from March to June 2020 and had to be extended because travel restrictions did not allow him to return to Bamako as planned. The second was Prof. Omar Egesah, a close collaborator of the IAS and a pillar of our African Cluster Centre at Moi University in Kenya. In Prof. Egesah we have lost an extraordinary colleague who was involved in many joint activities between the University of Bayreuth and Moi University.

In view of the terrible toll the disease has been taking, the restrictions imposed by the pandemic do indeed appear insignificant. Still, the restrictions have put serious constraints on our activities in the IAS and the African Multiple Cluster of Excellence. At the same time, in our efforts to adapt to the situation, we made unprecedented strides in developing digital solutions, allowing us to stay connected in times of limited mobility and to ensure that our academic exchange continues. In the pre-COVID-19 period, we held one larger conference – *Frontiers in African Digital Research in February 2020* – where we streamed the event in order to make attendance possible for those not present in Bayreuth. In the meantime, webinars, online workshops, and the livestreaming of conferences have become the new standard, whether in Bayreuth, Eldoret, Lagos, Makhanda, or Ouagadougou (to mention only the five cluster locations). The pandemic has thus brought us much closer to our objective of increased digital integration of all Cluster locations as well as other partner institutions of the IAS.

The new forms of digital communication will surely continue to play a central role. However, the experiences of the past year also made us realise that online meetings can never fully substitute for personal encounters. Hence, we desperately wait for the restrictions to be

lifted so that we can resume travel and physical meetings with our colleagues. However, it is unlikely that we will simply return to our old ways of conducting research and academic activities. Online and hybrid formats will certainly remain an important part of our routine as researchers, thus allowing us to intensify our exchange across long distances. Not only face-to-face contacts, but also research was halted by travel restrictions internationally and also within Africa. While researchers cannot wait to resume research without limitations, we anticipate that the amount and frequency of travel will be reduced in the future, not least as an effort to cut down on our carbon footprint.

Despite all the difficulties, 2020 was a productive year filled with exciting activities and stimulating debates and events. We therefore have a lot to report on in the current issue of the NAB. One of the highlights was the start of the new European Interdisciplinary Master African Studies (EIMAS), where the first cohort of students arrived for their first semester in Porto, Portugal in autumn 2020, to be followed by the summer semester 2021 in Bayreuth. The plans for the construction of a new building for African Studies, the *Research Centre Africa (Forschungszentrum Afrika)* are on track, and we expect construction to start in early 2022 as scheduled.

Last but not least, last year was the 30th anniversary of the Institute of African Studies, which was officially founded on 18 May 1990. Again, the pandemic did not allow us to hold a proper celebration. But we are eager to catch up on this missed opportunity when we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Iwalewahaus in 2021. We are looking forward to welcoming many friends and colleagues on the occasion of these upcoming events and activities, whether virtually or physically. For the time being, we hope you will enjoy reading the NAB 2020 – in its digital or printed format.

Cyrus Samimi and **Eva Spies**
Director and Vice Director,
Institute of African Studies

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

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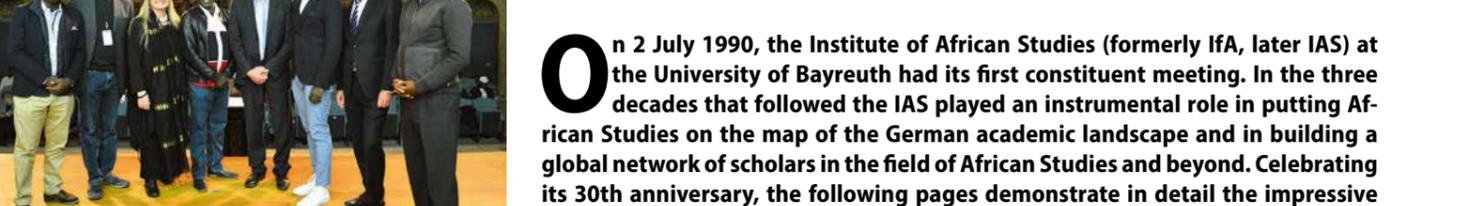
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On 2 July 1990, the Institute of African Studies (formerly IfA, later IAS) at the University of Bayreuth had its first constituent meeting. In the three decades that followed the IAS played an instrumental role in putting African Studies on the map of the German academic landscape and in building a global network of scholars in the field of African Studies and beyond. Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the following pages demonstrate in detail the impressive history and extensive academic work of the IAS and give a forum to companions that were or still are a part of the Institute's path.

Photos: BIGSAS, Fabrica Lux/Robert Götz, Sabine Greiner, IAS, UBT, Andi Weiland, Christian Wißler

30th Anniversary of the IAS – A Jubilee at a Distance

Bayreuth's Mayor Thomas Ebersberger, UBT President Stefan Leible and County Administrator Florian Wiedemann (from left) congratulated the IAS on its anniversary. (Photo: UBT)

Text RON HERRMANN

Due to the pandemic, the celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the Institute of African Studies had to take place on a much smaller scale than anticipated.

2020 was not a year like any other, and as in all other spheres also the academic life, research, teaching, and interaction was downsized or transferred into rigid digital means of collaboration. In spring 2020, the Institute of African Studies (IAS) commemorated its thirtieth anniversary under these new working and living conditions.

Although this anniversary celebration had been planned to include all active and retired IAS members, distinguished former and current international guests and artists in residence, representatives of all its partner organizations, and the local and transnational academic, political, and cultural institutions, circumstances forced another way of marking the anniversary. No public event, no celebrations. As one modest gesture of tribute, the directors of the IAS and Iwalewahauss offered the newly elected Mayor of Bayreuth Thomas Ebersberger, and the newly elected County Administrator Florian Wiede-

mann, the opportunity to visit the new art exhibition of the Iwalewahauss Sommerlabor jointly with the President of UBT, Stefan Leible, the Vice Spokesperson of the Cluster of Excellence Africa Multiple, Ute Fendler, and the former President, Helmut Ruppert. In the presence of Angelika Beck as Spokesperson of the Freundeskreis Iwalewahauss, the city's Head of the Department for Culture and Tourism, Benedikt Stegmayer, and the Head of the Bayreuth Marketing & Tourismus GmbH, Manuel Bech-

“The IAS is a guarantor for excellent Africa-related research, teaching, cultural activities, and a reliable partner.”

Cyrus Samimi, IAS Director

er, and prior to the guided exhibition tour, Ron Herrmann, the new Academic Coordinator of the IAS, highlighted the importance of the IAS as a bridge, interlinking the university campus with the community of Bayreuth.

In his opening address, IAS Director Cyrus Samimi emphasised the need for cooperation between the city, the district,

and the university, especially with regard to the shared goal of creating conditions for living and working together without discrimination. Samimi recalled in particular the achievements of Ruppert, on the one hand as former IAS Director and on the other as Vice-President and later President of the University of Bayreuth, under whom African Studies had been established and developed as a core asset of the university. Commemorating the IAS's thirtieth anniversary, the President of UBT, Stefan Leible proudly stated on the day of his own personal birthday, “Bayreuth stands more than any other university in Germany today for Africa. African Studies are for our university a unique feature.”

Also, both Ebersberger and Wiedemann emphasised the important role of the IAS as a reliable intermediary between excellent academic work and an open society, free from prejudices. 🌍

“We conduct research on Africa only with Africa. It is a relationship both sides carefully maintain. A relationship, which created most powerful friendships. A relationship, that became a success story.”

Stefan Leible, President of the University of Bayreuth

The Path towards the Institute of African Studies

Text HELMUT RUPPERT Photos UBT/BIGSASS

Helmut Ruppert, Professor of Geography and President of the University of Bayreuth from 1997 to 2009, recounts the steps that lay the groundwork for the Institute of African Studies (IAS) 30 years ago.



Helmut Ruppert,
President of UBT from 1997 – 2009

The founding of new universities in the '60s and '70s of the last century was an important educational policy desideratum. The steering committee guiding the launching of the University of Bayreuth was clear that the mission statement should include not only traditional university subjects, but future-oriented fields of study as well. The addition of strategic research disciplines was intended to make the newer universities competitive with long-established universities.

African Studies were put on the agenda

In December 1976, the steering committee, with the support of the sciences and humanities council, nominated 'African Studies' as one of four strategic research fields of the university. The Bavarian state government's 1977 Plan for Higher Education described the recommendation as follows: "The focus is not limited to African languages and linguistics, but includes a multi-disciplinary approach to the circumstances and problems in African countries and emphasises exploration of the context and interaction between different factors such as ecology, geography, religion, language and literature, history, law, economic development and social conditions ..."

Through the clearly defined requirements, scholars in the humanities and

social sciences with a focus on African experience were appointed. An additional advantage was the University senate's establishment of an African Studies Research Advisory Council in May 1979 under the chairmanship of the Afro and Romance language scholar Janosz Riesz.

The early integration of academics and artists from Africa in the work on African Studies in Bayreuth drew political attention. The first President of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor, increased the profile of Bayreuth's African scene during his visit to the Richard Wagner Festival in the summer of 1979. At the reception of the Bavarian Prime Minister, Senghor demonstrated his support of the university's concept. The Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs in turn endowed a guest professorship, the Léopold Senghor Chair, for academics from Africa.

The opening of Iwalewahaus on the sixth anniversary of the University's founding in 1981 was a special milestone for our cultural exchange with Africa. Ulli Beier, with significant experience in Nigeria and his rich knowledge about Africa, was appointed Iwalewahaus Director. Beier's diverse and varied activities strengthened cultural contacts with African creative artists which was enriched with the establishment of two positions

of 'artist-in-residence' for African creative artists.

Collaborative Research Programmes

The then-Vice President of the University Helmut Ruppert coordinated discussions about the further expansion of African Studies and the consequent path from a multi-disciplinary co-existence towards an interdisciplinary cooperation. The goal was to achieve a broad collaborative research basis of all the

disciplines related to African Studies. Already in November 1982, a proposal for a Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) – a collaborative research programme with the title *Processes of cultural and national identity in Africa* – was submitted to the German Research Foundation (DFG). Until the approval, discussions of the members of the SFB with reviewers specified the research agenda. The collaborative research programme (SFB 214) was officially established in 1984 under the title *Identity in Africa – Processes of its development and change under the auspices of social science*.

The SFB not only fostered cooperative research between the Africa-related humanities at the University, but developed research projects together with African scholars. The 1982 cooperation agreements with Universities in Dakar (Senegal), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Lomé (Togo), and Cotonou (Benin) built the first basis for joint research and teaching concepts.

In the following years, in addition to the SFB 214, many individual projects from Bayreuth scholars in the humanities and bio-physical sciences were funded by the DFG, the DAAD, and other foundations and ministries. These included specific academic disciplines and the continuing education courses; for example, the successful Bayreuth International Summer School (BISS) for African participants

reflected the importance of an Africa focus in the teaching mission.

Founding the IAS

It became necessary for the University of Bayreuth to coordinate the varied activities within a stronger framework. The aim was to bind the ecologically-oriented scientists even more to the humanities and social sciences departments beyond the SFB 214. The immediate goal included institutional security and the continuation of the multi-disciplinary African Studies situated in the SFB even after the funding through the SFB. To continue collaboration successfully in the future, the founding of an African Institute as a central body was planned.

The independent Iwalewahaus was meant to be incorporated as a department into the Institute of African Studies (IAS). The special task of Iwalewahaus (the organisation of exhibits, concerts, films, African pop culture events, and the collection of African art) would be supported under the auspices of IAS.

The University senate had already agreed

in May 1987 to the establishment of an Institute of African Studies. After discussions about the structure and content as well as the financing, the Bavarian State Ministry of the Sciences, Research, and the Arts approved the establishment of the IAS as a central department of the University of Bayreuth in April 1990. Every researcher in an African-related discipline of the University became member of the IAS executive committee: Professors Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, Dieter Fricke, Janosz Riesz, Franz Rottland, Helmut Ruppert, Gerd Spittler. The executive committee was supported by a full-time research associate as Coordinator. Two visiting pro-



Helmut Ruppert with representatives of Moi University

fellowships, non-personnel costs, and library resources were provided for the further expansion of the central African Library.

The coordination of all Africa-related research and teaching activities through the IAS led to increased research efficiencies and to a coordination of the courses offered in Africa Studies, especially for graduate studies. As a result, the International Research Training Group Intercultural Relations in Africa was approved by the DFG in 1990.

The IAS, as a central partner, has strengthened international networks and prioritised contact to African alumni. Additionally, in 1991 the IAS was a founding member of the research network Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS) with eight other African Studies institutes in Europe to foster inter-European cooperation and to promote interinstitutional and interdisciplinary synergies in knowledge production of European and African research institutes.



UBT Presidents Helmut Ruppert and Rüdiger Bormann with the winner Dialika Krahe at the BIGSASS Journalist Award 2011



The foundation of the TGCL was one of the milestones in the development of the IAS. (Photo: IAS)

30 Years Institute of African Studies in Bayreuth

Text DIETER NEUBERT, GERD SPITTLER, ULRIKE WANITZEK

Over the past 30 years, Ulrike Wanitzek, Dieter Neubert and Gerd Spittler, among many others, were instrumental in shaping the path of the Institute of African Studies. On the occasion of its 30th anniversary the scholars recap the history of the institution.

The groundwork for establishing the IAS in 1991 had already been laid at the founding of the University of Bayreuth (UBT) by the strategic decision to institutionalise a focus on African Studies at the university, as well as by several research projects which had been successfully realised or raised by 1990. Of the many projects that have decisively

shaped the development of the IAS, only a few central ones are mentioned here.

Shortly before the actual foundation of the IAS, a first Graduate School with the title *Intercultural Relations in Africa* (1990–1999) started at the UBT. It was one of the first graduate schools funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation DFG) in Germany. Field research in Africa on diverse forms of intercultural encounters, interdisciplinarity – subjects from three faculties were involved –, and a study programme for doctoral students were featured. Inspired by this programme, the Graduate School *Rural Regional Development in the Maghreb* (1993–2004) was launched. It was a cooperative enterprise together with the University Mohammed

V in Rabat, Morocco, funded by the German Agency for Technical Development (GTZ, now GIZ).

The second Collaborative Research Centre (SFB/FK 560), *Local Action in Africa in the Context of Global Influences* (2000–2006), included a broad range of disciplines: not only the classical Africa-related disciplines like anthropology, African languages, history, and geography, but also Arabic studies, sociology, economics, law, literature, religious studies, Islamic studies, and even natural sciences. Within the framework of the SFB/FK 560, numerous colleagues from Africa were invited to Bayreuth for shorter or longer periods.

The Point Sud Centre for Research in Bamako, Mali, went one step further.

Mamadou Diawara, who did his post-doctoral qualification in Bayreuth, founded this institute in 1997 with the help of the UBT, the SFB 560, and the Volkswagen Foundation. *Muscler le savoir local* or, *Strengthening local knowledge* is the institute's motto, which aims to bolster the African perspective in confrontation with international knowledge.

All these activities were echoed in teaching: From 2002 on and for the first time in Germany, Bayreuth offered African Studies Programmes at BA level (later also MA level) beyond the classical language studies, now including a wide range of subject fields from the humanities and social sciences as well as law and geography.

Over the years, this commitment to transcontinental research cooperation as well as to teaching and early career support has become the central concern of the IAS and has shaped all its subsequent initiatives.

A main step towards creating permanent structures for the promotion of young scholars was the founding of the interdisciplinary Bayreuth International Graduate School for African Studies (BIGSAS) that was funded by the German Excellency Initiative of the DFG in 2007. BIGSAS drew from the experiences of the earlier graduate schools, the integration of African doctoral students in the Collaborative Research Centre, and from three research projects funded by the Volkswagen Foundation's initiative *Knowledge for Tomorrow* that built on close cooperation with African universities. From the start, BIGSAS closely cooperated with African Universities in Rabat (Morocco), Eldoret (Kenya), Cotonou (Benin), Maputo (Mozambique) and Durban (South Africa), and later Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), which were selected from the more than 30 IAS partner universities in Africa. BIGSAS integrates all disciplines with a focus on Africa, reaching from language and literature and media studies over to social anthropology, religious studies, political sciences, sociology, history, law, economics and geography. Right from the beginning, half of the doctoral students have been from Africa. Despite a rigorous selection process, BIGSAS grew quickly to

up to over a hundred doctoral students. A logical consequence of the success of BIGSAS is the intensification of alumni activities (also including alumni from before the foundation of BIGSAS), who often are important partners in African universities today. This led to the foundation of an alumni network that started with the support of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (2009–2011, 2012–2013) and a series of six conferences in Africa and Bayreuth. The Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL) is another successful initiative to promote collaboration in research and teaching. The Centre was founded in 2008 as a joint project arising from cooperation between the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the University of Bayreuth. It is funded by the German Foreign Office through DAAD. The TGCL offers Master's and PhD programmes in law for future leaders in Eastern Africa. The thematic focus of the TGCL is on regional integration law, with special emphasis on the law of the East African Community (EAC). Accordingly, the TGCL students are drawn from all six partner states of the EAC (i.e., Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda). By the end of 2020, a total of 182 students had been admitted to the TGCL programmes and provided with scholarships. Of these, 27 were admitted to the PhD programme and 155 to the LL.M. programme.

Another milestone in the history of IAS was the research project *Future Africa* (2012–2018), funded by the German Ministry for Science and Education, which became the nucleus of the Bayreuth Academy (2012–2018). The study group of more than 20 permanent researchers combined interdisciplinary research in five subprojects with support for post-docs and the integration of guest researchers from Africa and other regions. In 2019 the institutional outlook and academic programme of the Academy was revised, and it was integrated into the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence.

Important developments in the technical research structure were the start of the digital archive for research data and artworks (DEVA) of Iwalewahaus, as well as for the digitalisation of the

library, communication, and teaching services at the University of Bayreuth and Moi University in Kenya (funded by DAAD, 2010–2014). Today the creation of a digital research environment is one of the pillars of the Cluster of Excellence and its aim to support new cooperative ways of research collaboration.

In addition to international cooperation, the IAS has always had the goal of promoting cooperation in Germany. The IAS became the leading institution for the Bavarian Research Institute of African Studies (BRIAS) founded in 2014. This institute supports the cooperation between the Universities of Bayreuth and Würzburg as well as the Technical University in Ingolstadt and the University of Applied Science in Neu-Ulm to acquire projects which aim to combine technical and social science perspectives.

Beyond research and teaching, the IAS also sees its mission as outreach to the wider public. Here, especially, is Iwalewahaus one of the pillars of the IAS, which contributes to public outreach with the presentation and discussion of art works. Additionally, festivals such as *Cinema Africa* and *African Literature* and the annual BIGSAS award for journalist reporting on Africa are central activities that spotlight African Studies in the city of Bayreuth to the German public.

All the achievements since the foundation of the IAS have led to its latest major success in its 29th year of existence: In 2019, the Cluster of Excellence Africa Multiple: Reconfiguring African Studies started. It is a core unit of the IAS and now integrates BIGSAS and the Bayreuth Academy. The IAS's aim to promote collaborative research on equal terms with African institutions is mirrored in the cooperation with the four African Cluster Centres (ACC). With the University of Lagos, Nigeria; Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya; the Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa; our network was expanded and strengthened, which again opens new ways to jointly work on new projects and the reconfiguration of outdated research structures. 

IAS Milestones

From the foundation of Iwalewahaus as UBT's Africa Centre to the planning of the Research Centre, this overview shows the most important events and highlights of the impressive path the IAS has embarked on.

Photo: Fabian Lehmann



The old home of Iwalewahaus

1981 Africa Centre – International Research is opened
IWALEWAHAUS

81

1984 SFB 214: Identity in Africa – Processes of its development and change is approved by the DFG

84

90

91

1991 IAS is founding member of AEGIS – Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies

06

2006 IAS becomes part of ZENEB – Centre for Natural Risks and Development (Zentrum für Natürliche Risiken und Entwicklung)

00

TGCL

2008 TGCL (Tanzanian-German Centre for Postgraduate Studies in Law) is founded

08

07

2007 BIGSAS – Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies



2007 DEVA – Database and Archive System for African Studies is created

1990 IAS – Institute of African Studies is founded



1990 International Research Training Group Intercultural Relations in Africa is approved by the DFG

10

2010 ANUB – Africa Network of Uni BT is established



2014 BRIAS – Bavarian Research Institute of African Studies is founded

14

19

2019 Cluster of Excellence is founded



Photo: Iwalewahaus



Wölfelstraße 2 in Bayreuth is home for both IAS and Iwalewahaus.

11

2011 SEED – New ICT Strategies for the Enhancement of Higher Education management is developed

12

2012 Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies



Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies BA

20

2020 Planning starts for the Forschungszentrum Africa (FZA)



The location of the planned FZA on campus of UBT (Photo: Sabine Greiner)

A model of the planned FZA on the campus of UBT
(Design: Staatliches Bauamt Bayreuth)



IAS: Committed to Creating a Diverse and Transformative Space

Text UTE FENDLER, CYRUS SAMIMI,
RÜDIGER SEESEMANN, EVA SPIES

With 30 years of research and networking in the name of African Studies under its belt, the IAS takes stock of what is today and what will be in the future.

An anniversary is an occasion to look back to the past and to celebrate the present moment, but it also calls for reflections about the future. Some of the IAS's visions for the future pertain to plans that the IAS hopes to realise further down the road, whereas others are already concrete and rather tangible.

New Research Centre for African Studies on its way

Let's start with an aim that is tangible. Probably before the end of 2022, construction work will start on the new Research Centre for African Studies (FZA)

on the university campus. The building is supposed to be completed in 2024 and will provide space for exchange and creative ideas, especially for PhD students in African Studies, but also for all other scholars as well as artists from or working on Africa. The building's infrastructure will support the implementation of digital solutions for new forms of cooperation and communication with partners in Africa and beyond. These plans were made well before the pandemic forced us into the digital space and complement the digital agenda of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, where innovative ways of digital research collaboration constitute a priority.

Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence: International knowledge production

The Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, now based at five locations – the four African Cluster Centres in Lagos,

Ouagadougou, Eldoret, and Makhanda in addition to the University of Bayreuth – and comprising almost 150 members, will soon unfold its full potential as a transformative space for research cooperation and joint knowledge production between academic partners based in Bayreuth and Africa – one of the cornerstones of our declared objective to reconfigure African Studies. The new professorships and the four Junior Research Groups we were able to establish in Bayreuth, combined with the even stronger partnerships with African universities, will help sustain and expand our achievements in the field of African Studies for the next decade and beyond. In 2025, when the Excellence Strategy of the German Federal and State Governments is supposed to go into its second round, the Cluster will be up for renewal. Preparing the application for the extension will become a major task for the Cluster starting as early as 2022.

Beyond the Cluster: BRIAS

While the Cluster continues as our flagship project, the IAS will continue to support Africa-related research activities and networks beyond the Cluster. The Bavarian Research Institute of African Studies (BRIAS) with its four partner institutions will ensure that Africa remains visible in the Bavarian research arena and will further expand its outstanding expertise in a broad range of academic fields. Our vision for BRIAS lies in the promotion of applied research based on a strong theoretical foundation.

Digital expertise: Iwalewahaus

Through Iwalewahaus, the IAS will be involved in a new initiative for the documentation and digital publication of collections from colonial contexts based in Germany. Called Three-road strategy on the documentation and digital publication of collections from colonial contexts held in Germany, this initiative of various German federal and state government agencies will connect a total of 25 museums and institutions in Germany. The inclusion of the IAS and its partners underscores our potential role in supporting postcolonial and decolonial initiatives in this area, as well as our rising visibility as experts in digital solutions for vast collections.

Striving for excellence in African Studies

In the coming years, the Institute will pay special attention to revising its African Studies curricula. The University of Bayreuth already offers a broad range of Africa-related BA and MA programmes, and the IAS will facilitate the process of dovetailing the offerings with each other, as well as with our major research initiatives. Through our international network, the IAS team will support student mobility as well as staff exchanges, which will complement similar activities at the level of the renowned Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies. By tying these activities together with its international summer schools and the newly established European Interdisciplinary Master African Studies (EIMAS) programme, the IAS leadership is confident that the IAS will attain its objective of sustainable excellence in teaching on all levels in the near future.

Another area where the IAS seeks to sharpen its profile is the cooperation between University of Bayreuth-based scholars and non-academics. In the past, Iwalewahaus has been a pioneer in such cooperation and inspired similar working formats in the Bayreuth Academy of

Advanced African Studies in its earlier funding phase. These efforts eventually coalesced in the Cluster's transdisciplinary agenda, which the IAS plans to consolidate in the coming years by systematically supporting collaboration with artists and non-academic research partners. Again, the African networks and Africa-based institutional partners established by the IAS will play a crucial role in the endeavour to encourage joint local knowledge production between academics and non-academics.

Growing outreach

Last but not least, and in line with the increasing importance of the so-called 'third mission' of the universities, the IAS outreach activities will continue to grow in the city of Bayreuth as well as in the wider region and beyond. The Institute will provide a forum for encounters between researchers and larger publics, support civic and educational programmes, and engage in the search for new ways to make our research and teaching relevant for constructive dialogues in society. The IAS remains committed to its vision of a diverse, non-discriminatory, and cosmopolitan space within academia and in the wider society, where African Studies has the potential to play a visible and transformative role.

The team of the IAS 2020: (from left) Ron Herrmann, Daniela Löwinger, Cyrus Samimi, Eva Spies, Mirjam Straßer
(Photo: IAS)



Jacob K. Olupona: My Memories of IAS



Photo: Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard Staff Photographer

Text JACOB K. OLUPONA

In the course of 30 years, the IAS in Bayreuth has touched many an academic life. Jacob K. Olupona, Professor at Harvard University, USA, reminisces about his very own experience at the University of Bayreuth's centre for African Studies.

Thank you for the invitation extended to me to reflect on my experience at the African Studies programme of the University of Bayreuth on this august occasion of the 30th anniversary of its founding. My sincere congratulations to the faculty, staff, and students and particularly, my friends and colleagues in African Studies and the Department for the Study of Religion.

My first connection with Bayreuth was in the late 1980s, by the invitation of Ulrich Berner, who was the Chair of Religious Studies at Bayreuth. As a Visiting Research Fellow, I was privileged to meet many scholars and up-and-coming young graduate students from Africa and Germany. And I must confess that after this initial visit, I never really left Bayreuth in terms of my scholarship and my future research.

My sojourn at the initial stage of my brief visits allowed me to learn about the German academic system, which is very different from the American and the Nigerian systems that I was used to. I recall that during this time, the University of Bayreuth had developed a significant interest in African Studies; scholarship in African Islam, African literature, and African religion among other fields were growing exponentially. What amazed me was the interdisciplinary syllabus as the focus of the African Studies programme, under which several of the curricula in the Social Sciences and the Humanities were based.

My interest in African religion, for which Ulrich Berner's professorship was established, brought us together and ultimately led to several collaborative works. Ulrich's position enabled him to recommend to Bayreuth visiting lecturers and young scholars who came to do their graduate studies. Ulrich had approached me in Nigeria and later in the USA, and encouraged me to nominate strong candidates for training in religious studies. One of those students whom I had taught at the University of Ife (now: Obafemi Awolowo University) in Nigeria, was Afe Adogame, now

Professor of Religion at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA. Several of the students from Africa, myself and other senior scholars from Africa, were regularly invited to join hands with Bayreuth faculty to train and mentor the next generation of graduate students in our field.

Ultimately, Bayreuth's African Religion curriculum developed to become a leading programme in religion in Germany and the world, and its African Studies centre became, in my opinion, the leading African Studies programme in Germany. No wonder then that Bayreuth continues to compete effectively in the very competitive German educational system, and why it continues to attract young Africanist scholars from all over the world.

Based on my Bayreuth experience, I did not hesitate to call attention to the Humboldt Foundation in Berlin in 2015 during my hip year to an aspect of the German exchange scholarly programmes. What amazed me was the interdisciplinary curriculum that the Bayreuth African Studies programme operated. Several of the curricula in the Social Sciences and Humanities

were based on this programme, which I consider far superior to other African-focused training courses in other developed countries. What I have in mind here is the flexibility of the visiting programmes that enable young scholars who begin their academic training in the various German institutions the opportunity to return to these institutions for further work while developing their careers in their home institutions. The unforeseen consequence of this is that by the time these young scholars have spent a few academic visits to Germany, they have become not only well schooled in the German system, including learning the language, but also on their return to their native lands, they no longer think of emigrating to America or Europe. Nevertheless, they always cherish the opportunity of returning to continue their research, build networks,

and bond with their host institutions and their faculty.

On a more personal note, my visits to Bayreuth enabled me not only to share ideas and my scholarship with the Bayreuth students, to lead seminars and lectures in the very popular religion workshop, but also to connect some of the students to fascinating field sites in Nigeria.

I would be remiss not to mention my strong interest in Bayreuth's programmes in the Arts, through the very famous Iwalewahaus, founded by Ulli Beier, the legendary scholar of African and especially Yoruba arts and culture. When I was invited to give a keynote address to mark his retirement, I chose a topic titled, *A Tale of Two Germans: Ulli Beier and Leo Frobenius*. By mere acci-

dent I was unable to obtain a visa to visit Germany from the USA at that time. I therefore designated Adogame, who had just graduated from the University of Bayreuth, to read my address.

Finally, during my last visit to Bayreuth, I received an invitation from Eva Spies to participate in an African Religion seminar. I gave a lecture titled *Seeing is Believing, Knowing is Understanding: Doing Research in Nigeria*. After a fascinating interaction with the students, it occurred to me that despite all my visits, I did not have a memento from Bayreuth. So, I went downtown to the mall and began to look for an appropriate store where I could buy a suit that was very native to the Bavarian and German culture. I am glad I got one, which is still in my wardrobe, in my country home in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. 

The Management of the IAS over the years

Directors and Vice Directors

	Directors	Vice Directors
01.10.1990 – 30.09.1991	Helmut Ruppert	Jamil Abun-Nasr
01.10.1991 – 30.09.1992	Jamil Abun-Nasr	Helmut Ruppert
01.10.1992 – 30.09.1993	Jamil Abun-Nasr	Gerd Spittler
01.10.1993 – 30.09.1994	Gerd Spittler	Jamil Abun-Nasr
01.10.1994 – 30.09.1995	Gerd Spittler	Helmut Ruppert
01.10.1995 – 31.03.1997	Helmut Ruppert	Gerd Spittler
01.04.1997 – 30.09.1997	Helmut Ruppert	Gerd Spittler
01.10.1997 – 31.12.1997	Gerd Spittler	
01.01.1998 – 31.12.1998	Gerd Spittler	Gudrun Mieke
01.01.1999 – 31.12.2000	Gudrun Mieke	Gerd Spittler
01.01.2001 – 31.12.2001	Dieter Neubert	Gerd Spittler
01.01.2002 – 31.12.2002	Dieter Neubert	Gerd Spittler
01.01.2003 – 31.12.2003	Dieter Neubert	Gerd Spittler
01.01.2004 – 31.12.2004	Dieter Neubert	Gerd Spittler
01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006	Herbert Popp	Dieter Neubert
01.01.2007 – 31.12.2008	Dymitr Ibrizimow	Dieter Neubert
01.01.2009 – 31.12.2009	Dieter Neubert	Achim von Oppen
01.01.2010 – 30.09.2011	Achim von Oppen	Ute Fendler
01.10.2011 – 30.09.2013	Ute Fendler	Ulrich Berner
01.10.2013 – 30.09.2015	Ute Fendler	Ulrich Berner
01.10.2015 – 30.09.2017	Dieter Neubert	Rüdiger Seesemann
01.10.2017 – 30.09.2019	Rüdiger Seesemann	Cyrus Samimi
01.10.2019 – 30.09.2021	Cyrus Samimi	Eva Spies

The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on 2 July 1990

Academic Coordinators

1990 – 2005	Eckhard Breitingner
2008 – 2010	Christina Ahr
2010 – 2011	Ricarda Bienbeck
2011 – 2013	Idris Riahi
2013 – 2020	Franz Kogelmann
from 2020	Ron Herrmann



Ulrike Wanitzek with TGCL students, TGCL staff and Dorothee Weyler (DAAD) in Berlin (Photo: TGCL)

Ulrike Wanitzek: Honouring the ‘Mother of the TGCL’

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER

The University Medal 2020 went to Ulrike Wanitzek, a founding member of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, for lifetime achievement.

Each year, the *dies academicus* celebrates the anniversary of the foundation of the University of Bayreuth. And each year, the University makes use of this stage to award the University Medal to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the academic landscape. This year, the medal went to the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence’s founding member Ulrike Wanitzek. The legal scholar, who retired in April 2020 after having served the University of Bayreuth for four decades, was acknowl-

edged for her achievements in the field of law as well as for her tireless efforts and pioneering work in African Studies.

Academic Background

At the University of Bayreuth, Wanitzek completed her law studies with the first state examination. After her legal clerkship, including the second state examination in Augsburg, she was drawn back to the city where she had started her education. Wanitzek earned her doctorate and later a degree in post-doctoral studies in the fields of civil law, comparative law, and sociology of law at the University of Bayreuth. Between 2001 and 2007, she lectured at the Institute for African Studies (IAS) in the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Bayreuth, before founding the Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies

(TGCL) in 2008. In her academic career, Wanitzek developed a special expertise in regional cooperation and legal integration, women’s and children’s rights, as well as land law, particularly in Tanzania and Ghana. Furthermore, among her numerous accomplishments was the establishment of a new subsidiary subject, ‘Law in Africa’, for which she shared manifold insights from her empirical research on living law and legal pluralism. Currently, Wanitzek is the Senior Academic Director of the IAS in Bayreuth.

Outstanding interdisciplinary network

Combining her two passions for law and the African continent, Wanitzek built an outstanding interdisciplinary network that connected legal and other scholars of the University of Bayreuth with academics all over the world, especially in

the Global South. As a member of the IAS Steering Committee, she made sure that the juridical component was ever present in the interdisciplinary dialogue on the topic of Africa.

Founding the Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL)

Wanitzek has continuously added to the international visibility and global networking of the University of Bayreuth. She founded and successfully directed the Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL) in 2008. With a thematic focus on regional integration law in the East African community, the TGCL has become a key institution in the training of future leaders within the region. The highly specialised LLM and PhD programmes are conducted at the School of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam, in close cooperation with the University of Bayreuth. During her twelve years as project leader, Wanitzek successfully ushered more than 120 students to their degrees.

UDSoL Award in 2020

To honour the decades of distinguished service and dedication Wanitzek offered to the field of African Legal Studies via her committed personal and later institutional cooperation with the University of Dar Es Salaam School of Law (UD-

SoL), she was presented with an appreciation award on behalf of the UDSoL as acknowledgment. In particular as Director, Wanitzek led the TGCL throughout a decade of successful cooperation between the University of Dar Es Salaam School of Law and the University of Bayreuth. A partnership set to last.

Lasting impact

The African Studies focus area at the University of Bayreuth and the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence continue to benefit from Wanitzek’s longstanding groundwork. She helped in shaping the



Ulrike Wanitzek always especially supported the younger generation of scholars.

(Photo: Fabrica Lux/Robert Götze)

Cluster’s agenda in its formative period by inserting essential juridical components and contributing her outstanding expertise and network.

Cecilia Ngaiza presented the UDSoL Award to Prof. Wanitzek at her residence in Bayreuth. (Photo: Ulrike Wanitzek)



The extent of her achievements is also reflected in the recently established Chair of African Legal Studies – a unique chair at the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Bayreuth, which was specifically created to carry forward Wanitzek’s work following her retirement.

To all the colleagues and students whose lives she has enriched and shaped, Wanitzek has been much more than an inspiring legal scholar and passionate project leader. She has enthusiastically supported young academics in their aspirations and steadily contributed to an open and productive working climate. Through her open-minded, cooperative, dedicated, and appreciative personality, Wanitzek has created lasting personal and professional ties between Bayreuth, Dar es Salaam, and many other places. 🌍



Ulrike Wanitzek was a founding member of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. (Photo: Jürgen Rennecke)

„The Chair Aims to Cross-fertilise and Inform Epistemic Changes across Disciplines“

Interview and photo SABINE GREINER

While the pandemic was in full swing in 2020, a new chair was established at the University of Bayreuth: Sabelo J. Ndlovu Gatsheni joined the Cluster of Excellence as head of Epistemologies of the Global South with Emphasis on Africa. In this interview, the renowned scholar talks about his first weeks in Germany as well as his goals and foci for the new position.



Prof. Dr. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, you arrived at the University of Bayreuth in the middle of a pandemic and had to set up a brand-new chair and commence your first semester under these circumstances. How have you been coping?

My appointment coincided with the intensification of coronavirus and the lockdowns across the world. This made me happy and anxious simultaneously. Happy that I got the job but anxious that I had to prepare for the change of jobs within a constrained environment, where travel was very restricted except for repatriation flights. The German Embassy in Pretoria was so supportive, as were the colleagues in the Human Resources and Welcome and the International offices/departments. My family was also happy and anxious simultaneously because our young son had no passport yet. We had to get him one as soon as possible, but again within a context where the offices were closed. Fortunately, we managed to get all the paperwork on time for me to assume duties by mid-2020.

I arrived in Bayreuth at the beginning of August 2020. I was lucky to be included

in the repatriation flight for EU citizens and those travelling for employment purposes. My family joined me at the end of August 2020, also because they were allowed to board the repatriation flight for EU citizens and those travelling to join family. This meant that I

“The establishment of the chair in Epistemologies of the Global South [...] indicated that [UBT] is on the right side of history in terms of reacting practically to the insurgent and resurgent demands for decolonisation of knowledge.”

had to find family accommodation very quickly and, again, with the help of colleagues here at Bayreuth, I managed to get the house sorted in no time.

The next challenge was to regularise our stay here which meant fulfilling various bureaucratic regulations from the immigration office, and again there was always help from my secretary and colleagues. Work-wise, I had to hit the ground running in two ways. I had to immediately prepare for winter semester teaching and also lay the foundation for the new chair in Epistemologies of the Global South. How I coped with this was because of the support of the

colleagues here in Bayreuth. I also drew from my long experience as an academic in five other universities where I worked in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. That experience enabled me to cope.

You are chair of Epistemologies of the Global South with Emphasis on Africa – why, in your opinion, is it important to offer this scholarly focus at UBT?

The establishment of the chair in Epistemologies of the Global South with Emphasis on Africa at the University of Bayreuth indicated that the institution is on the right side of history in terms of reacting practically to the insurgent and resurgent demands for decolonisation of knowledge – demands which have assumed a planetary scale. This chair is very unique in that it is not disciplinary. This gives it the force to cross-fertilise and inform epistemic changes across

Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni started his new position as Chair for Epistemologies of the Global South in July 2020.

disciplines. The chair’s interventions in theory, methodology, epistemology, and praxis positions it at the cutting-edge of research, teaching, and learning demanded by the 21st century. In the current century, there is no institution of higher education that can successfully continue to ignore the demands for ecologies of knowledges drawing from epistemologies of the Global South – the south being the majority world whose knowledges have been pushed to the margins since the time of colonial encoun-

ters. Thus, the chair in Epistemologies of Global South is timely in many ways and indicates a positive attitude of the University of Bayreuth to be the leading institution in pursuit of relevant knowledge generation and teaching that is not hostage to old knowledge that is Eurocentric. I see the chair maturing into a catalytic and galvanising force for decolonisation of epistemologies, scholarship, curriculum, and pedagogies. My chair brings fresh air of thinking across academic and intellectual traditions as well as thinking, researching, and teaching beyond the prison walls of disciplines and disciplinary tribes.

What are the topics that you most want to convey to your students here at the University of Bayreuth and what are the topics you are most passionate about in your research?

I am already actively involved in teaching in Global History, Anthropology, Development Studies, and BIGSAS. Underpinning what I am offering to the students is to make them aware of the complex politics of knowledge itself and

“I see the chair maturing into a catalytic and galvanising force for decolonisation of epistemologies, scholarship, curriculum, and pedagogies.”

to be sensitive to cognitive injustices which have deprived the modern world of access to some of the most useful knowledges about being human itself, about other visions of life, and about

other ways of relating to the environment in non-colonial and non-capitalist ways – capable of serving human lives and the earth itself. In terms of research, I am most passionate about recovery of epistemologies of the Global South in general and African endogenous knowledge systems in particular. I am passionate about understanding the liberatory potentials of ‘worlding’ from

“What my chair is bringing is the necessity of rethinking thinking itself about Europe and Africa intellectually and academically as essential pre-requisites for the reconfiguration of African Studies.”

the Global South. I am passionate about the feminist and womanist archives that have consistently confronted the patriarchal and sexist forms of power and oppression. I am passionate about the intellectual resources from the Black radical tradition which for centuries has been concerned about the fate of Africa and the lives of those invented as Black. I am passionate about the politics of knowledge and the decolonisation of institutions of higher education so as to attain ecologies of knowledges and mosaic epistemologies. In a nutshell, I am passionate about epistemic justice and epistemic freedom!

You are an important part of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence – what are you hoping to contribute to the organisation and what are you hoping to gain in return?

My engagement with BIGSAS is under the banner of *Epistemologies of the Global South: Contributions to Reconfiguration of African Studies*. This is meant to inject into the research theory from the south, epistemologies of the south,

ways of decolonising methodology, and decolonisation of curriculum. This in a way is a practical contribution to the task of reconfiguring African Studies. What my chair is bringing is the neces-

sity of rethinking thinking itself about Europe and Africa intellectually and academically as essential pre-requisites for the reconfiguration of African Studies. What I emphasise is the necessity of serious engagement with the existing African archive and building that archive through research. My chair also emphasises the importance of changing the consciousness of us as academics and

intellectuals through voluntary subjection to the painstaking process of learning to un-

learn in order to relearn. In return, I hope to see the changes influencing the broader trajectory of the University of Bayreuth and its repositioning as the most progressive institution of higher education in Germany and the world at large.

Before joining the University of Bayreuth as Full Professor and Chair in Epistemologies of the Global South with Emphasis on Africa in July 2020, **Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni** worked as a Research Professor and Director in the Department of Leadership and Transformation as well as a Full Professor in the Department of Development Studies at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, South Africa and served as Founding Head of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute for Applied Social Policy (AMRI).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni deploys decolonial thought to reflect on development as an idea, discourse and practice. He has published over a hundred peer-reviewed publications consisting of seven sole-authored books, eight edited volumes, over 60 journal articles in internationally renowned and peer-reviewed journals such as *African Affairs*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Third World Quarterly* and *Round Table: International Journal of Commonwealth Studies*.

African Alphabets of the Bayreuth Cluster: Cluster Launches AABC App

Text and photos ULRICH REBSTOCK

In 2020, the Cluster's Research Section 'Learning' developed an app for mobile and desktop devices providing users with keyboards for 44 of the most common African languages and scripts.

In late 2020, the Cluster of Excellence published African Alphabets of the Bayreuth Cluster (AABC), an application that facilitates the work of African Studies scholars. The application for desktop devices and mobiles was developed to provide a common linguistic base for all kinds of communication and the transfer of information about African affairs inside and outside the Cluster.

App considers a multitude of requirements

The app's development concentrated on two aspects: technical suitability and linguistic authenticity. The trilingual app (German, English, French) must be robust enough to be applied on the four main types of devices – desktop and mobile devices run by both Windows and Mac – and suitable to operate under urban and rural conditions. Its installation and use had to be easy, and its development and support immediately and simultaneously applicable for all devices. These requirements demanded additional technical efforts, but forced the developers to accept a few, hopefully not final, limitations with respect to the representation of characters. To display all the alphabets and fonts used in Africa on keyboards within one and the same app environment meant to enter unknown territory, not only in terms of technology and design, but also in terms of user conventions and normativity. With three different standard Latin keyboard systems for German, English, and French, the transliteration of African languages into the Latin keyboard alphabets required flexible solutions, often veering into five- and four-lines-keyboard systems. Standardised solutions were rarely available. Often it was (and still is) initiatives led by local experts

who set themselves the goal of modifying or replacing existing, mostly exogenous alphabets, and their corresponding keyboard layouts with new designs. Sometimes, professional linguistic interests were also involved. When designing the keyboards of the AABC app (in cooperation with Marvin Müller of App-Stone GmbH [www.app-stone.org]), priority was given to the vernacular requirements and suggestions of the users concerned. Since the development of the AABC app with currently 44 selectable keyboard layouts is an ongoing process, suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Novel operating features

The app is optimally adapted to the conventional specifics of the device used. After installation, all the app keyboards are integrated into the respective operating system and can be treated there like all other keyboards. When switching from one keyboard to another, all device-specific restrictions are communicated to the user. Among the various novel operating features of the app is the use of the top line of numbers for frequently used shortcuts in non-Latin keyboards, as well as a new approach to displaying and using diacritics and letter variants in the mobile applications. Of particular importance is the assignment of up to twelve variants of each individual letter by using the caps lock key on the normal side and the superscript side (see fig. below). This includes diacritics, up to four of which can be added to each letter at a time.

It is to be hoped that the interest shown by ERef (Bayreuth University Library, Digital Services) and the data curators of the Cluster in AABC will attract more attention to the app. The accurate and authentic handling of texts, terms, and proper names of African provenance must be regarded as one of the cornerstones of the Cluster's research principles.



Ulrich Rebstock is the mastermind behind the app.

Ulrich Rebstock taught Islamic Studies at the University of Freiburg. Among his research fields are Islam in Africa, Islamic Law, and the history of Arabic mathematics. His fieldwork in Africa began 1978 with a project on the collection and safeguarding of Arabic manuscript literature in Mauritania which led to the publication of *Maurische Literaturgeschichte vol. I-III* (Würzburg 2001).

Adlam for Fulani in West Africa



List of supported African languages

- Adlam
- Adlam Latin
- Amharic
- Amharic Latin
- Arabic
- Awngi Blin
- Xamtanga
- Azerty
- Bambara
- Bamum
- Bamum Latin
- Bamum Unicode
- Bassah Vah
- Bassah Vah Latin
- Bench
- Coptic
- Coptic modern
- Dizi Me'en
- Mursi Suri
- Ethiopian
- Ge'ez
- Ge'ez Latin
- Harari
- Hassāniya
- Hausa
- Luo
- N'ko
- Oromo Latin
- Osmanya
- Osmanya Latin
- Pan-African
- Pan-Nigerian
- Qwerty
- Qwertz
- Sebatbait
- Silt'e
- Somali
- Swahili
- Taqballit
- Tifinagh
- Tifinagh Latin
- Tigrinya
- Tigrinya Eritrean
- Wolof
- Wolofal



Arabic keyboard: Variants, diacritics

#LockdownVoices: Artists Coping with the Pandemic

Text SABINE GREINER

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence asked artists associated with the organization how they coped with the situation. Their answers and contributions could be found on all social media channels of the Cluster under the hashtag #LockdownVoices.

In May 2020, the Corona pandemic had taken the world by storm. Every aspect of daily life and work was affected by the crisis that had people practice social distancing, keeping to themselves and staying at home since as early as late February. With exhibitions being cancelled, concerts postponed, and venues closed the global creative community felt the repercussions of the Corona crisis as much if not much worse than the rest of the world. Even though their livelihood was in jeopardy many of them turned to an artistic outlet to give voice to their anxiety and frustration. They used their vocation and talent as a valuable outlet channeling their worries and thoughts

and subsequently shared them with the world.

Giving a platform to the Cluster's creative community

The Cluster of Excellence asked artists that are associated with the research organization to share their artwork that was created during that special time. Posting or sharing this input on the social media channels of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence a new hashtag was created in order to mark these contributions as evidence of a special time in global history. Prof. Dr. Ute Fendler, Deputy Spokesperson of the Cluster and PI of the Cluster's Research Section "Arts & Aesthetics", explains: "The hashtag '#LockdownVoices' has been created to give artists a platform to display their thoughts and creations during this trying time. It is conceived as a form of moral support for the artistic community



Facebook – @AfricaMultiple,
Twitter – @ClusterAfrica,
Instagram – @exc2052,
YouTube – Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, and
LinkedIn – Cluster of Excellence Africa Multiple.

that is especially suffering from this crisis." If you would like to keep track of the Cluster's social media activities, follow Africa Multiple on:

Philosophy and Genre: An ERC Consolidator Grant at the University of Bayreuth

Text and photo ALENA RETTOVÁ

Alena Rettová is Principal Investigator with the ERC Consolidator Grant established in April 2020 at the University of Bayreuth. The ERC Consolidator Grant aims to examine the role of genre in philosophical expression within the rich traditions of thought in Africa.

Since 1 April 2020, the University of Bayreuth has hosted an ERC Consolidator Grant entitled *Philosophy and Genre: Creating a Textual Basis for African Philosophy*, led by Alena Rettová, Professor of African and Afrophone Philosophies at the University of Bayreuth. The Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence and the

within a literary tradition and a culture: both have a profound impact on what philosophy examines and communicates. The impact of genre on philosophical expression is especially relevant in African cultures, where academic philosophy has been decisively informed by European philosophical traditions and still remains largely oriented towards Western philosophers or, at best, by the globalised discourse of postcolonial criticism. As a consequence, the academic tradition of philosophy in Africa uses almost exclusively European languages and projects its understanding of reality within a European philosophical conceptual repertoire; it is divorced from philosophical discussions developed

in Africa; Benedetta Lanfranchi works on digital genres; Michelle Clarke studies short fictions that project scenarios of ecological development; and Albert Kasanda interrogates the essay in Ciluba. Another senior researcher, Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, Professor of French Studies at the University of Warwick, UK, collaborates with the team. Fraiture works on Francophone novels and essayistic prose. The Principal Investigator, Alena Rettová, works on novels in Swahili, Lingala, Shona, English, and French. Rettová also collaborates on Sufi poetry in Swahili and Wolof with a doctoral student who is currently being recruited to complete the team.

The project was launched in the beginning of the coronavirus crisis and its first year was heavily affected by the pandemic and the anti-virus restrictions imposed by the governments of European and African countries. The team have regularly met online. They run a webinar series, inviting prominent scholars who work on texts in African languages, as well as a virtual reading group elaborating the multiple facets of genre theory. In

collaboration with the Centre of Global Studies, Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences in Prague, Rettová co-organised the seventh conference of *Asixoxe – Let's Talk! African Philosophy Conference*, which took place virtually from 15 to 16 June 2020. The next annual conference took place on the same dates in 2021, also virtually, and it featured keynote speakers such as Rogai Abusharaf, Paulin Hountondji, Malesela John Lamola, Dismas A. Masolo, and Irina Turner. This year's theme was *The genre of reality: African Philosophy in the COVID-19 crisis*. 🌍



The team in session with filmmaker Anna Sowa of Chouette Films (top row from left: Anna Sowa, Albert Kasanda, Alena Rettová, Chantal Gishoma; bottom row from left: Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, Michelle Clarke, Benedetta Lanfranchi)

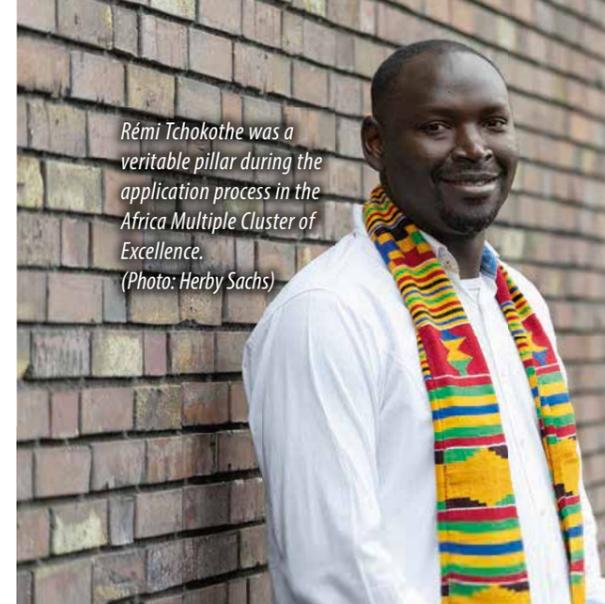
support the University gives to the study of African intellectual traditions, African languages and literatures, African art, postcolonial and decolonial theory, and of the epistemologies of the Global South create a unique context for the work of the ERC team.

Examining the rich traditions of thought in Africa

Philosophy and Genre argues that philosophy is always expressed in a specific language, and language is always conventionally assembled in a textual genre. This situates philosophical discourse

through the medium of African languages and through genres that have for centuries served to articulate philosophical topics in African cultures. *Philosophy and Genre*, running until March 2025, draws upon case studies in eight languages and multiple genres to theorise the role of genre in philosophical expression and to examine the content of the rich traditions of thought in Africa.

The team at the University of Bayreuth consists of three postdoctoral researchers and one senior researcher. Chantal Gishoma's research covers poetry in Kin-



Rémi Tchokothe was a veritable pillar during the application process in the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. (Photo: Herby Sachs)

Rémi Armand Tchokothe: Founding Member of the Cluster of Excellence Transitions to Vienna

about a possible research topic on African literatures that can help bring the University and the wider community together. An example is my current MA course titled *Black Skin, White Bones: Rwanda 1994 and Humanity's Collective Memory(cide)*. In this framework, five students will receive training at Radio Orange, a Vienna-based community radio station, and produce podcasts on the course content, which remains universally relevant.

The IAS celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2020. Having been part of African Studies at UBT for such a long time, how do you see the role that the IAS played in African Studies in Germany and around the globe?

Kindly allow me to remind you that the event that took place at Iwalewahaus on this occasion in May 2020 was a mismatch. "Research on Africa with Africans" was not reflected in the event and in the photographs that were circulated afterwards. This was a rookie mistake, but it does not diminish the immense work that many visionaries have put into making Bayreuth, a city that even many Germans would find hard to locate on the map, a global player in African Studies. The IAS has been instrumental in attaining this international recognition through the coordination and organization of conferences, summer-winter schools, visiting hips, setting up cooperation agreements with universities in Africa and elsewhere, facilitating the acquisition of third-party funding, and especially its role as an ambassador of the University of Bayreuth worldwide. At all the places I have visited on four continents during my IAS years people always happily mentioned the IAS and were looking forward to coming back to Bayreuth.

You also played a prominent role in preparing the application for and the subsequent establishment of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. What was your vision for this institution, and what are your preliminary conclusions after two years?

Oh, yes! I spent most of my last years at the University of Bayreuth co-working on this application. I will summarise my vision and conclusions in four points. Firstly, as an early career researcher, I wanted to learn the dynamics of writing a wide-scale interdisciplinary project proposal. Secondly, I wanted to be part of the next chapter in Bayreuth African Studies, a chapter in which working on equal footing with colleagues in/from Africa would be reinforced and the politics of creating positions, recruiting, and consolidating positions in African Studies would put diversity more into focus. The Cluster has made significant strides in this direction, but there is still a long way to go. Thirdly, regarding the research agenda, I wish to emphasise the need for more socially relevant research projects, rather than projects that turn the African continent into a testing ground for context-irrelevant theoretical experimentation. Lastly, I strongly wish that Clusters in general provide more space for advanced research and reduce the administrative demands on the researchers. 🌍

A scholar of African Literatures and Languages and founding member of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, **Rémi Tchokothe** hails from Cameroon, which he left in 2002 after receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and English Literature from the University of Buea. He spent 18 years at the University of Bayreuth as an MA student, PhD student, and assistant professor. After completing his PhD in African Literatures and Linguistics in 2012 at BIGSAS, he took up the position of academic councillor at the Chair of African Linguistics II, where he expanded his earlier research interests in the field of Swahili fiction to include African youth languages and the nexus of literature and migration. As one of the few African scholars employed at the University of Bayreuth at the time, Tchokothe was instrumental in putting Critical African Studies on the agenda of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. He remains affiliated with the Cluster, where he co-directs the research project "Multiple Artworks, Multiple Indian Ocean" and remains an outspoken advocate for the reconfiguration of African Studies.

Interview SABINE GREINER

One of the key figures in the establishment of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Rémi Tchokothe left his alma mater in Bayreuth for a tenure track position at the University of Vienna, Austria.

Dr. Tchokothe, how did you find the transition from Bayreuth to your new position as Assistant Professor in Comparative Literature with a Focus on African Literatures at the University of Vienna?

Despite the kick-off during the corona crisis, my transition has been personally fulfilling and intellectually rewarding. I found in Vienna knowledge-hungry students and dedicated colleagues. They give me the feeling that they really appreciate my research profile and that my sometimes unconventional approach enriches their curricula and research agendas. It feels so good to be welcomed in a new academic environment. Once in a while, I find myself reading the call for applications again and smiling while remembering the famous song "Vienna calling".

Which research topics are you currently working on?

I am pursuing my research interests although currently at a reduced pace. I hope to be able to conduct fieldwork in The Comoros Archipelago in September on the topic of "Migration" to the French/European island of Mayotte, which I pursue in my research project within the Cluster. Meanwhile, I am in conversation with colleagues and community actors in Vienna and in the process of taking notes



The dean of the Cluster of Excellence Rüdiger Seesemann



Rémi Tchokothe



Ute Fendler



Markus Zanner

New Year Lecture: Figuring out How to Reconfigure African Studies

Text and photos SABINE GREINER

On 16 January 2020, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence invited the interested public to the Cluster's first annual New Year Lecture. Rüdiger Seesemann, Dean of the Cluster, took it upon himself to give the inaugural lecture under the title *Figuring out how to reconfigure African Studies, providing illuminating insights into what the Cluster has set out to achieve*.

In late 2019, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence decided that the Cluster's yearly line of activities were in need of a proper kick-off event. The idea of the annual New Year Lecture was born. The

lecture was envisioned as a platform where members of the Cluster present, exchange, and further develop ideas that provide leads for joint work in the months to follow. For 2020, none other than the Dean of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Rüdiger Seesemann, presented the inaugural New Year Lecture as the first of a series of yearly events.

"Teenage years" of the Cluster begin

The inaugural New Year Lecture took place on 16 January 2020. While conceived as the first get-together of all Cluster members in each calendar year, invitations also went out to the interested public. Markus Zanner, Provost of the University of Bayreuth at the time, delivered a welcome address to a huge crowd:

more than 150 people had accepted the invitation and attended the highly anticipated lecture in person, with many more watching via live-stream. Zanner congratulated the Cluster on its first year of existence. Comparing the Cluster's expected life-span of seven years with the lifetime of a person, he mused, "With one year gone, the infancy of the Cluster is now almost over. Now, I wish the Cluster good 'teenage years!'"

An ongoing process

After being introduced by Ute Fendler, the Cluster's co-spokesperson and Vice Dean of Internationalisation and Public Engagement, Seesemann first reviewed the previous months of the Cluster's existence, from the selection of the African Cluster Centres in July 2019 to its offi-

cial inaugural event, the opening conference that culminated in a magnificent concert in the Margravian Opera House in late October 2019. He then reflected on the Cluster's logo, which can be read as a metaphor for the multiple forms of connective knowledge production the Cluster aims to achieve. The Dean went on to mull over the Cluster's motto "Reconfiguring African Studies", describing it as "a lofty objective" echoing the Cluster's overarching aim, "which is no less than the reconfiguration of African Studies, on both the conceptual and the structural level." Seesemann explained that the Cluster, as stated in the original proposal text, "is conceived as a transformative space, within which to systematically advance the study of African and African Diasporic ways of life and world-making via the pursuit of cutting-edge research and theory-building based on new inter- and transdisciplinary formats of research cooperation. However," Seesemann continued, "developing a blueprint for the reconfiguration of African Studies is one thing, and implementing it is another." The first year had taught the members of the Cluster an important lesson: Recon-

figuring African Studies was a process that required perseverance. Rather than taking a few straightforward steps, the Cluster members need to figure out over and over again how to reimagine African Studies.

Necessary tools to reach the Cluster's goal

According to Seesemann, the Cluster employs two important structural tools in order to work towards this goal: First, the establishment of new research partnerships with African academic partners through the African Cluster Centres, thus complementing the existing research networks; and second, the gradual creation of a Digital Research Environment designed to take over three essential tasks: to connect all segments of the Cluster's research infrastructure, to offer tools that allow the Cluster members to work jointly with shared databases, and to provide working formats that reflect the heterogeneity, complexity, and dynamism of the Cluster's research. Seesemann also stressed the importance of the Cluster's agenda for the promotion of gender equality and diversity, where structural

and conceptual components are closely intertwined.

Multiplicity is key

The Dean of the Cluster also gave a detailed exposition of the Cluster's research agenda and asked whether 'Africa' could be defined in the first place. Seesemann scrutinised this question by using the example of Islam as object of study in Islamic Studies – his area of expertise. In order to introduce a substantial change of perspective, he emphasised the need to overcome binary models inherited from the colonial gaze by zooming in on the multiplicity of the research object. The conceptual reconfiguration of African Studies, he argued, means to explore and analyse the multiple, relational, and reflexive ways in which the African lifeworlds studied intersect and co-constitute each other. In conclusion, Seesemann summarised, "As we embark on the reconfiguration of African Studies, it is of paramount importance to continuously reflect on the various layers, levels, and intricacies of our endeavour. At the same time, we need to keep our focus on the conceptual shift required to steer the study of Africa in new directions." 🌍



The Online Knowledge Lab 2020

(Photo: Adobe Stock)

Text: ROBERT DEBUSMANN

The Cluster's Knowledge Lab made a virtue out of necessity: As a response to the pandemic the events completely shifted to an online format and as a result brought the international Cluster members even closer together.

The Knowledge Lab is the central forum of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence where overarching theoretical and methodological discussions take place. Cluster members and guests, groups as well as individuals, present their research projects to exchange ideas, discuss their methods, and engage in systematic reflection on their work and disciplines.

Changes and challenges in 2020

Two major developments have shaped the form and content of the Knowledge

Lab in the past year. Firstly, after defining four annual themes to focus theory discussion on, the Cluster formed four annual theme groups. These groups are designed to engage a broad range of people and perspectives in programme and event planning. Each group consists of Principal Investigators, early career researchers, and further Cluster members, and coordinates an annual programme with the support of the Vice Dean of Research's team. This includes the events for the plenary colloquium and the programme for the annual Cluster conference. The group will also publish an anthology based on the annual theme which results from the events of the academic year and will be one of the key publications of the Cluster. The annual theme groups are open to all Cluster members who wish to actively participate in the design of events and the further development of the Cluster agenda.

Secondly, in response to new working conditions resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic, Knowledge Lab meetings were completely shifted to digital communication formats. The forms of collaboration in the Cluster abruptly changed with the contact ban, as did the collaboration with international partners. From the summer semester of 2020 on, no more face-to-face meetings were held in Bayreuth. Since then, Knowledge Lab meetings have been held entirely as online Zoom events.

The switch to online meetings took some getting used to: no more meeting people in a real room, no more communicating through the nuances of physical expression, no more face-to-face conversations around the scheduled meetings. The participants of the digital Knowledge Lab communicate via a static screen with sometimes poor resolution, unstable connections, and shaky

picture or sound, without eye contact. The new daily routine takes its toll, and Zoom fatigue was noticeable for many participants after a while.

Moving closer together

But the change was more than a stop-gap – it had positive consequences. The Cluster was forced to use existing technical facilities (in particular, video conferences) on a daily and systematic basis, to develop suitable working formats for them, and to integrate both into the Cluster's everyday life. The online events of the Knowledge Lab are planned and prepared more intensively, moderator and discussant roles are assigned, and all steps and procedures are precisely coordinated. The events are carefully documented: some are recorded. Above all, the difference between Cluster members present in Bayreuth and those absent

has disappeared. In the new formats of digital sociability, ACC partners have become closer, and the exchange of content with them has intensified considerably. Meanwhile, most of the Knowledge Lab events are planned with the participation of the ACCs.

COVID-19 has also set new framework conditions for research. Research trips had to be postponed or even cancelled, which put a lot of strain on project staff. In the Knowledge Lab, this has led to a focus on conceptual discussions, exchanges of ideas about field research in Africa under pandemic conditions, and a particular attention to alternative ways of making research data accessible. Finally, Cluster members felt challenged as researchers to live with the threat of a viral epidemic and to do their best to better understand it and its consequenc-

es. In this context, workshops exploring the impact that the pandemic is having in Africa were organised with the ACC partners, and several publications on this topic are in preparation.

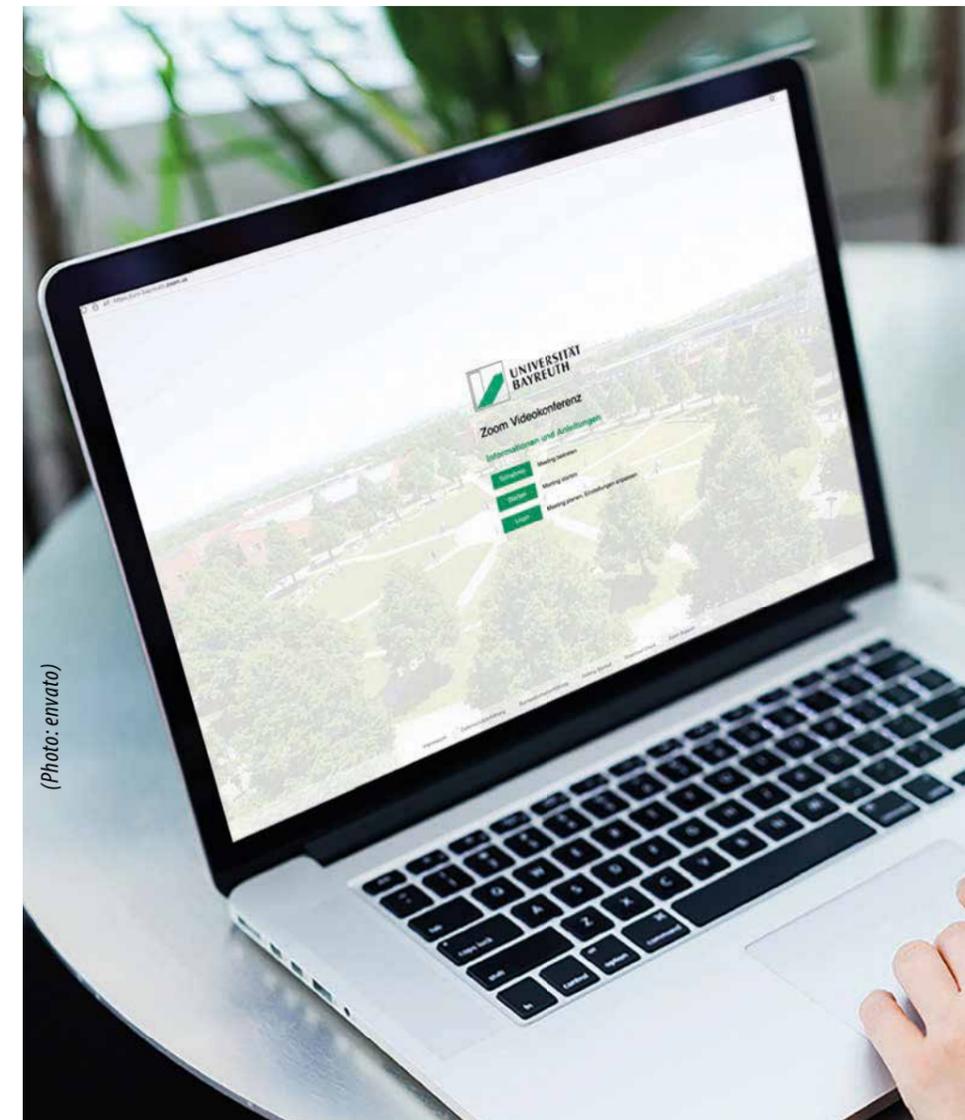
Website of the Cluster's annual themes and annual theme groups:



The Knowledge Lab

Located at the centre of its research activities, the Knowledge Lab interlinks the cluster's three main research structures: the African Cluster Centres, the Academy, and the Research Sections. It offers a variety of meeting formats – from the ad hoc to the regular and formal – for cluster members and guests to come together and propel academic debates. As the locus of these meetings, the Knowledge Lab assembles scholars and their research projects in various venues to exchange ideas and methods and to engage in debate and systematic reflection. Directed by the Vice Dean of Research, it generates a thriving intellectual and interdisciplinary research environment that also includes non-academics, such as artists and activists, and stimulates transdisciplinary synergies and research.

The Knowledge Lab is crucial in connecting the Cluster's theoretical, epistemological, and methodological issues. Accordingly, it is subdivided into three interlinked spaces for debate and exchange: The *Theory Forum*, the *Reflexive African Studies Forum*, and the *Methodology Forum*.



(Photo: envato)



The participants of the two-day conference on Digital African Research in front of Iwalewahaus

The International Conference *Frontiers in Digital African Research* in Retrospect

Text CYRUS SAMIMI, ANJA DREISER
Photos SABINE GREINER

At the end of January 2020, the Cluster's Digital Solutions team organized an international conference on the topic of digital research in African Studies. The event, called *Frontiers in Digital African Research*, attracted experts from all over the world to Bayreuth for presentations, discussion, and exchange.

Who would have thought at the beginning of last year that the conference *Frontiers in Digital African Research*, organised by the Digital Solutions team of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, would be one of the last major non-virtual research events of the Cluster before COVID-19 first turned everything silent and then moved it into the digital sphere? Even though the pandemic already had a stranglehold on Wuhan by then, the conference's organisational team was able to bring speakers and visitors together in person at Iwalewahaus from 30 January to 1 February 2020. Additionally, the Digital

Solutions team started to address their aim to use the digital space as a better link to the Cluster's partner universities. The talks were live-streamed, but only the talks. Today, with the forced development of online formats, the academic community handles online conferences more professionally. The post-COVID world will definitely profit from the experiences, which started in February 2020. Going forward, there will be more hybrid formats, which will allow a much broader communication. Furthermore, since the field-driven research of many Cluster-funded projects cannot take place because of the pandemic, issues of data retrieval, data processing, and statistical data evaluation and data verification in social media networks have become an alternative option to field driven-data agglomeration. These approaches



Stefan Ouma, Chair of Economic Geography at the University of Bayreuth, in his analysis of knowledge production procedures of the five big academic

Stefan Ouma held a lecture on digital knowledge infrastructures.

require their own concepts, methods, and tools – an aspect that would have its own place in a panel of a conference organised nowadays.

Although the conference format might have been 'old fashioned' in some respects, all the topics of digital transformation that were addressed in four thematic panels from the angles of various disciplines have stayed current and have become even more relevant through the pandemic. Indeed, the opening keynote speech by Tunde Ope-Davies (Opeibi), Professor at the University of Lagos, addressed the impact of the exponential growth in the use of ICT technologies across the African continent and emphasised the opportunities these technologies provide for the digitalisation of academia in Africa and African Studies and collaborative research.

publishing houses, illustrated that Big Data epistemology, originating from economically-driven contexts, has already entered the academic field. Research data becoming proprietary capital in this corporate world finds, however, counter-developments in green open access initiatives and data blogs. Focusing on the potential of societal change through ICT technologies, Zakari Ya'u from the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) in Kano, Nigeria, gave in-depth insight into the reasons for the gender digital divide in Nigeria and showed ways to overcome it and build up a gender digital inclusion agenda.

The topic of legal and ethical requirements in research data management (RDM) processes has remained equally important or has become even more so through the wider use of digital tools, like video conferencing, since the start of the pandemic. Alex Makulilo from the African Law and Technology Institute (AFRILTI) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, presented an overview of the state of the art in privacy law regulations on the African continent, mostly drafted after the model of European General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) rights but not yet finally adopted. Makulilo also pointed out that the main challenges lie in the varying perceptions of privacy and awareness of the matter in Africa. This is also due to a lack of experts concentrating on the issue, especially in an academic context.

Oliver Watteler from the GESIS Leibniz-Institute for Social Sciences in Cologne, Germany, then gave insight into the complex issue of the GDPR, also in relation to the question of data collec-

tion and data processing in and outside the EU, which is of high relevance for African Studies scholars based in the EU. Michael Kwet from Yale University, USA, subsequently gave an entirely different view, talking about 'techlash' and the issue of digital colonialism, where decentralisation, education, and global equality are an imperative. Markus Coester from the University of Bayreuth addressed copyright and intellectual property rights (IPR) issues, particularly in relation to research on African music, criticising the large amount of unsolved and only insufficiently addressed issues.

The panel Semantic Web Technologies was a mixture of best practice projects on ontology-driven information systems and their architecture, with interlinked important aspects of semantic mappings, especially in the field of natural language processing (NLP), as Gábor Bella from the University of Trento, Italy showed: the mapping of concepts of meaning in different natural languages allows diversity-aware digital language resources and tools for underrepresented languages to be built up. This will help to overcome the digital language divide and will enable balance between universality and uniformity, as well as locality and diversity, in the digitalised world.

The panel on Digital Archives and Repositories in Africa and African Studies again aimed to dive into existing databases and projects, touching also upon issues of outreach and participation, as with the International Library of African Music (ILAM) of Rhodes University in South Africa. How archives can be used for participatory research and practices



From left: the Vice Dean of Digital Solutions, Lecturer Tunde Ope-Davies from Lagos, and the Cluster's Dean Rüdiger Seesemann

The conference facilitated discussions between lectures.



nowadays, turning the music archives into living holdings, was shown by the ethnomusicologist and ILAM archive director Lee Watkins. Usability, accessibility, and creating awareness of archival holdings and their relevance in an increasingly digitalised society form part of social and economic development. Awareness of historical archival holdings, their preservation, and accessibility are equally at the heart of the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) of the British Library, discussed by its curator, Jody Butterworth. After an overview of the project's history and its outreach by web access statistics, recently accomplished digitisation projects in Africa were presented, including the early Islamic pious prints of the Maalim Muhammad Idris collection in Zanzibar and the Taal family archives in Senegal and Mali.

Mireille Djenno introduced the audience to the comprehensive collections on and from sub-Saharan Africa held at Indiana University, and how they are currently accessible to users. The panel closed with the talk by Wolfgang Kraus about the Ethnographic Data Archive (EDA) recently established at Vienna University, Austria. While current science policy demands unrestricted sharable open data, he pointed to the problems these demands pose to ethnographic data with its qualitative dimension and equally highly person-driven components. Despite these specifics, Kraus emphasised the importance of preserving digitally ethnographic data and sharing it whenever possible, as rich and interesting materials and information are embedded in these datasets and supersede the research questions of their primary researcher.



Transdisciplinary and Insightful: Symposium on Intersectionality

Text and photos SABINE GREINER

Since October 2019, the topic of intersectionality has successfully been added to the curriculum of the University of Bayreuth. In the beginning of February, a symposium on the topic brought even more scholars and students together for a valuable exchange. It scrutinised intersectionality as a concept and as an analytical approach that influences political activism.

The Africa Multiple Cluster and the Gender, Queer, Intersectionality und Diversity Studies (GeQuInDi) network at the University of Bayreuth invited students and scholars to attend a three-day symposium on *Intersectionality: Theory, Approach, Activism* from 6 to 8 February 2020. This academic event focused on how intersectionality as a concept and as an analytical approach influences political activism. During the course of the event, participants attended lectures on the topic as well as critical debates that addressed the poetics, ethics, and politics of intersectionality. "With this symposium, we aimed to frame the discipline of Intersectionality Studies and show its deep connections to the history of activism. We wanted to create a platform for a fruitful discourse and make it as trans-

disciplinary as possible," symposium organiser Susan Arndt, Professor of English Studies and Anglophone Literatures at the University of Bayreuth, explains.

In October 2019, Arndt founded a complementary studies programme at the University of Bayreuth titled *Intersectionality Studies*. Arndt says: "The symposium was a perfect way to end the first semester of our new programme – we were able to offer students and scholars a valuable array of different opinions and views on intersectionality. They were able to participate in the debate with experienced and renowned scholars of the topic."

Keynote by S.N. Nyeck

The symposium started on Thursday evening with a keynote by S.N. Nyeck who at the time was residing in Bayreuth as a fellow of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies. Nyeck built her talk titled *Intersectionality, Intercontextuality and No-thing* around the film *Proteus* and scrutinised intersectionality and examined queerness in the colonial context. "Implied in the very idea of intersectionality is the assumption that something must always intersect at a given intersectional construct. Yet, axiomatically and empirically, an intersection may yield nothing and is said to be 'empty' even if the intersecting sets are not," Nyeck pointed out.

The Future of Intersectionality

The second day of the symposium started with a panel discussion focusing on the future of intersectionality. Nyeck, Arndt, Antje Kley and Annette Keilhauer, both from the Friedrich-Alexander-University in Erlangen, and Christine Vogt-William, the Cluster of Excellence's Director of the Gender and Diversity Office, all contributed to the debate. The discussion's topics ranged from intersectionality in literary studies, to the use of the term 'race', and to the relevance of the study of intersectionality itself.

Panels on Friday

On Friday, two panels discussed the topic of intersectionality from various angles:

Panel Activism and Resistance (Chair: Christine Vogt-William):

■ **Ramola Ramtohul**
(University of Mauritius)
Intersectionality and women's intersectional activism in Mauritius

■ **Rejoice Chipuriro**
(University of Johannesburg)
Endangered political voice. Reflection on activism in Zimbabwe's 'new dispensation'

■ **Antje Daniel (University of Vienna)**
Intersectionality and protest: New pathways in social movement studies? Intersectional lens on student protests in South Africa

Panel Intersectional Decolonisation (Chair: Antje Kley)

■ **Tania Mancheno**
(University of Hamburg)
Notes on a decolonial approach to manhood

■ **Peter Simatei**
(Moi ACC, Moi University, Eldoret)
Diaspora's intersectionalities

■ **Xin Li (University of Bayreuth)**
*Post-colonial and post-human intersectionality – Towards a trans*sectional paradigm*

The day came to a festive close with music played by the Merheba Duo: after a long day of discussions and lectures the participants gladly listened to Mahan Mirarab on guitar and Uygur Vural on cello.

Keynote by B Camminga

The last day of the symposium started with a keynote by B Camminga from Wits University, Johannesburg. Camminga talked about *Intersectional silences: A reading of parliamentary debates about transgender asylum seekers in South Africa*. They started from the specific rights that are granted to trans-

gender persons in South Africa and that should be granted to transgender asylum seekers, too, but as Camminga stressed, transgender asylum seekers are both, transgender and asylum seekers, and thus face intersectional discrimination. In bringing together xenophobic and sexist biases, these perceived illegal immigrants are left in an either-or position. This was shown by looking at state-NGO-LGBT-dynamics and the tensions between constitution and realities. As Camminga showed, all this is happening in a field of transnational influences setting frames and leaving transgender asylum seekers between transformativity and transnormativity.

Panels on Saturday

Afterwards, another three panels examined intersectionality from various perspectives:

Panel: Trans*Intersectionality (Chair: Annette Keilhauer)

■ **Tomás Jules Fuetty (University of Kiel)**
Trans and critical diversity*

■ **Mario Faust-Scalisi**
(University of Bayreuth)
Sexuality minority rights and Chilean comic cultures

The organiser of the event, Susan Arndt, at the panel discussion



■ **Pelagia Goulimari (Oxford University)**
'Where are you (really) from?' Transgender ethics, ethics of unknowing, and transformative adoption in Jackie Kay's Trumpet and Toni Morrison's Jazz

Panel Transgressing Knowledge (Chair: Nadine Huftnagel)

■ **Jody Metcalfe (University of Bayreuth)**
Mixed race adoption in South Africa and Germany

■ **Dilan Zoe Smida**
(University of Bayreuth)
Knowledge, emotion, critical feminism, mad studies

■ **Numaira Khan**
(University of Bayreuth)
Exclusion and subordination of Hindu widows in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel: Water

Panel Intersectional Feminism (Chair: Mario Faust-Scalisi)

■ **Tomupeishe Maphosa**
(University of Bayreuth)
No home for a girl in return

■ **Stephen Mutie**
(Kenyatta University, Nairobi)
African intersectional feminism(s) and the power of the margins: Perspectives from Wangari Maathai

■ **Nelly Fais-Sad**
(Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main)
Lolita – The myth of the child-woman in visual media

The symposium ended with an overview as to where Intersectional Studies are heading – as theory, approach, but also as activism. 

The group of participants in front of IWALEWAHAUS





Photo: Ben den Engelsen/Unsplash

The First Year of African Legal Studies in Bayreuth Saw Various Digital Events

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER, ISABELLE ZUNDEL

The Chair of African Legal Studies at the University of Bayreuth looks back at its first full year since its establishment in late 2019.

2020 has been the first complete year of the Chair of African Legal Studies (ALS)

and, since then, a lot has happened already. The unexpected outbreak of the pandemic in spring of 2020 knocked initial plans on the head but at the same time marked the beginning of a rethinking. Creative solutions for new ways of academic exchange were sought and found. And the increasing digitalisation opened up new ways of cooperation in the academic field. In this spirit,

ALS Chairholder Thoko Kaime and his team brought the African legal world to Bayreuth through a number of digital events.

Everyone's human rights – a series of debates on human rights in Africa

From August to October 2020, the Chair of ALS at the University of Bayreuth hosted a series of debates under the title

Everyone's human rights – A series of debates on human rights in Africa. Held for the first time, the series comprised five lectures followed by discussion, and presented diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives on the topic of human rights.

The series was kicked off by Joan Nyanyuki, Executive Director of the African Child Forum in Ethiopia, speaking about *Improving access to a child friendly justice system in Africa*. Her talk specifically showcased the challenges that children on the African continent are frequently confronted with. In the second lecture, Redson Kapindu, High Court Judge in Malawi and professor at the University of Johannesburg, focused on the topic *The principle of human dignity in constitutional adjudication in Malawian courts*. The third speaker, Melina Kalfelis, member of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced

African Studies, lectured on *They are frightening, but I can sleep at night. On violence, human rights and security in the postcolonial state*. Kalfelis described her current research on Koglweogo, a self-defence group establishing forms of extra-legal governance in Burkina Faso. Yvonne Dausab, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Namibia, continued the series in her talk *Using the law as a tool to enhance social justice: locating Namibia's value system using the text of the Namibian constitution*. Chikosa Silungwe, Attorney General of the Republic of Malawi, rounded off the series with his talk on *Constitutions and human rights: Whispers from the 'South'*, focusing on the Malawian presidential elections in 2019/20. The extensive, fruitful, and interdisciplinary discussions after each presentation provided a frame for close and informal exchanges between all participants and was described as "academically stimulating" by Kapindu.

First Chilean-German-Tanzanian Legal Talk (CGT Talk)

On 28 September 2020, the Tanzanian German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL), of which Kaime is also project leader, together with the Heidelberg Centre Latin America (HCLA) launched a legal talk series. The first conference – held online – brought together over 40 students and researchers from East Africa, Latin America, and Germany. This connection between scholars from the Global South is innovative in the history of the TGCL.

Firstly, Jesse James of the University of Dar es Salaam School of Law, Tanzania, presented on the topic of *Synopsis of Tanzania human rights legal framework*. Secondly, Rita Lages from the University of Chile, Faculty of Law, Human Rights Centre, gave an introduction to the migration and asylum law of the European Union. The third presentation, entitled *Fundamental rights in the current Chilean constitutional debates*, was given by Sven Korzilius, HCLA, who is a long-term DAAD lecturer at the Law Faculty of the University of Chile. The online event ended with a lively discussion where comparisons were drawn between the respective countries.

As Inés Recio highlighted in her words of welcome, the first session of the Chilean-German-Tanzanian Legal Talk marks a way of exploring possibilities

to expand academic cooperation in research and teaching beyond our respective regional focus. As a result, the third CGT Talk is currently being prepared.

Climate Justice in the Global South

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Climate change laws, energy laws, and human rights frameworks are key instruments for coping with this challenge. The Global South is disproportionately affected by the global implications, which should be reflected in the measures designed to fight climate change. On 12 October 2020, the Chair of ALS hosted a workshop featuring leading international experts on this topic, each focusing on a different specialist subject. The speakers were: Stephen Turner, of the University of Essex, Philippe Cullet, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, Rosalind Malcolm from the University of Surrey, all in the United Kingdom, and Patricia Kameri-Mbote and Oguge Nicholas Otienoh, both from the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

Kaime also gave input focusing specifically on the role of the African Union in relation to climate change. After each presentation, the topic was reflected on in a thought-provoking conversation with the audience. The workshop was also the kick-off event to the Chair's seminar *Climate Justice in the Global South*, which focused on the possibilities available in international environmental law and human rights to seek just and equitable outcomes for communities in the Global South for damage resulting from climate change.

All of the aforementioned events have been made available to the public on the official YouTube Channel of the ALS Chair. In addition to the events, the Chair of ALS has established the africanlegalstudies.blog in which cutting edge analysis on key issues in African politics, law, and development are published weekly.

Following this QR code leads to the YouTube channel of ALS





the iconic movie theatre Reichshof was the venue for the 2020 Cinema Africa. (Photo: Sabine Greiner)

Cinema Africa Presents AfriKaleidoskop – a Film Night at a Historic Movie Theatre

Text SABINE GREINER

The Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence continued its cinematographic endeavours in 2020. In January, the Cluster extended an invitation to see three outstanding films during one movie night.

When *Cinema Africa* was founded thirteen years ago by Ute Fendler, Chair of Romance and Comparative Literature at the University of Bayreuth, her vision was clear: Bringing African voices

and pictures to a broader German audience. Today, that vision is so much in line with the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence's agenda that it came as no surprise that the research organisation has adopted and supports the initiative's projects wholeheartedly.

After a very successful cinematic festival held in the fall of 2019, the Cluster's Internationalisation and Public Engagement portfolio went full speed ahead to plan a number of cinematographic events that were supposed to happen in the course of 2020. However, the *Cine-*

ma Africa screenings, along with every other artistic get-together around the world, came to an abrupt halt as soon as the Corona pandemic hit Germany in March 2020. And so it came about that *Cinema Africa's* only event of 2020, *AfriKaleidoskop* took place on 15 January 2020.

AfriKaleidoskop presented at an iconic place

For *AfriKaleidoskop*, Fendler and her team invited people to experience a set of three films during an all-night movie event. The location had been chosen

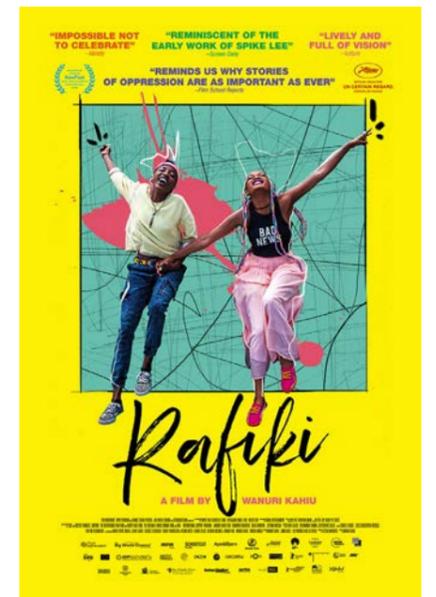
carefully: *Cinema Africa* welcomed the audience at the Reichshof, an iconic movie theatre in Bayreuth that once was the crown jewel in a group of distinguished cinemas but eventually had to make way to the big cineplex chains; today the Reichshof is used for selected events only. "To give people a chance to see our presentation in that historic setting in Bayreuth made the evening extra special," recounts Fendler, who is also the Deputy Spokesperson of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. "We aimed to combine old and new, modern and old-fashioned, German and African, in order to give people an extra incentive to come and join us." The plan worked out just as the organisers had hoped and a total of 150 people came together to experience one, two, or all three of the movies presented at the renowned movie hall.

Broad spectrum of African storytelling

The movie selection of that night spanned a broad spectrum of African cinematography, providing the audience with a diverse and insightful set of stories. Varying in their artistic expression and thematic choices, all three movies left the audience both contemplative and moved. The first movie of the evening was *Fig Tree* by Ethiopian-Israeli director Alamork Davidian. It is set during the civil war in Ethiopia in the late 1980s and offers an unusual perspective on a period when a considerable number of members of the Jewish community tried to flee to Israel. The audience follows the protagonist Mina, who is worried about her Christian friend while her family slowly but surely leaves the country in search of a better life.



The movie *Farming* is not set in Africa, but in Tilbury, United Kingdom: When a black teenager is placed in a white British family by his Nigerian parents, he is faced with an identity crisis of enormous proportions. When Eni becomes a teenager, he finds himself a part of a group that he himself had fallen victim to before – a gang of skinheads. *Farming* is a ruthless autobiographical account by the director Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje bearing witness to a questionable practice of the 1960s and 1980s. The film dramatically showcases the brutality of racial cleavages in the United Kingdom.



The last film of the night was *Rafiki*. The drama, directed by Wanuri Kahiu, tells the story of two young Kenyan women, Ziki and Kena, who fall passionately in love. However, with their relationship socially unacceptable in Kenya and their parents working as political enemies, their romantic journey soon becomes more and more difficult and dangerous.

Series on Afro-European identities

In spite of the pandemic, the series continued with a number of online screenings on Afro-European stories in 2021. "We are confident we will present more films with an audience in attendance as soon as the COVID restrictions are lifted," explains Fendler. "In response to the feedback we received last year, the latest *AfriKaleidoskop* presentations will always be followed by a discussion, so the audience can share and debate the impressions that they have gotten from their viewing experience." 🇳🇮



On Worlds and Artworks Mirrors Work of the Research Section Arts and Aesthetics

Text CLARISSA VIERKE / Photos SABINE GREINER

From 10 to 14 February 2020, the Research Section Arts and Aesthetics organised its first workshop, *On Worlds and Artworks*. It took place partly in the Research Institute of Music Theatre (FIMT) in Thurnau and partly in Iwalewahaus, mirroring the broad range of arts represented in the Research Section.

The Research Section (RS) Arts and Aesthetics takes inspiration from a perspective on multiplicity that brings artworks, as multi-layered configurations which have their own way of relating to the world, to the forefront. Artworks constantly emerge through and in relation to each other, as do the material and social conditions in which they take shape and make alternative existences sensorially perceptible. In the RS Arts and Aesthetics, internal discussions on arts and their relations and notions of world and worlding became a central concern during the winter semester. Drawing on a number of notions of worlds and worlding, particular interest was taken in approaches highlighting a processual notion of world(ing) as constantly coming into being and being itself multiple. Artworks can accordingly also appear in and call into being various worlds.

This major concern was explored further in the workshop: How do artworks relate to worlds? How do worlds emerge in configurations of artworks? Accordingly, contributions were invited which reflected on the way artworks in a broad sense (literature, music, theatre, film, painting, performance etc.) and from various contexts imagine multiple worlds. Contributors were invited to reflect upon their own case studies/findings on aesthetic practices and artworks by addressing the following question: How do artworks create and inhabit multiple worlds? Considering worlding as a performative act also invites for contributions which consider African cinema, music, literature, performance, and so on not as merely part of an essentially given and neatly delineated African continent nor as part of a Southern-North-

ern dichotomy. How are African films, music, and narratives circulated in and conditioned by sites, media, and structures in Europe and Asia? How do they make reference to, imagine, and emerge in relation to the material conditions of these various sites? Which role does the aesthetic nature of the arts, which emerges in concrete form, play in this regard?

Lastly, notions of 'world' have played a prominent role in discussion of the arts in recent years (world literature, world cinema, world music) – though in different ways and also drawing on various conceptual bases. Despite growing postcolonial criticism, African arts have been typically essentialised in these contexts. Thus, worlding also invited papers critically considering the politics of circulation, exclusion, and inclusion.

The Workshop

The workshop was attended by 27 participants from Europe, South America, and Africa, including our Cluster doctoral students. BIGSAS doctoral students also came to listen to specific lectures. On the first day, the keynote by Erhard Schüttelpelz unfortunately had to be cancelled due to sickness. Instead, the workshop participants had a first get-together in the restaurant Ponte in Bayreuth. On the second day, a bus shuttle picked the participants up in Bayreuth and took them to Thurnau. Originally, the whole workshop was supposed to underline the RS's commitment towards music and its future expansion of collaboration with regard to music and performance by taking place in Thurnau. To save costs,

however, the whole workshop could not take place there. However, a whole day in Thurnau, including a concert and an artist performance featuring the singer/performer Corine Kwami was arranged. Another artist and activist, Chinelo Enemuo also enriched the programme on the first day by introducing her own form of artwork and community-based artist research in rural Nigeria. While C. J. Odhiambo (ACC Moi) considered the theatre for development projects and their creation of alternative imagined worlds, Michaela Ott (Hamburg, project leader Dividuations) proposed new perspectives on aesthetic world-making. Later Sophie Lembcke, working in the same project and writing a PhD on alternative forms of curation, explored the limits and fantasies of ethnographic museum worlds. Marie-Anne Kohl (FIMT), who had professionally organised the day in Thurnau, shared her reflections about the curation of musical festivals, which she intends to explore in more detail in her new research project. Later Anno Mungen, Director of FIMT, gave the enthusiastic participants a guided tour through Thurnau.

On the second day, held in Iwalewahaus, a whole series of papers focused on Indian Ocean imaginaries, starting with Elena Brugioni's (University of Sao Paulo) exploration of literature and photography of ruins, Kumari Issur's (University of Mauritius) consideration of posthuman island narratives on Mauritius and Duncan Tarrant's (University of Bayreuth) overview of his fieldwork findings on Zanzibar exploring the multiple affiliations of Zanzibari poets in the research

project *Multiple Artworks – Multiple Indian Ocean*. Peter Simatei (ACC Moi) with a focus on Indian diaspora writers and Ute Fendler unearthing a relational transoceanic photography and Clarissa Vierke highlighting the changing far-reaching links of Swahili poetry from different regions and epochs further added to the Indian Ocean discussion.

In the afternoon, Ulf Vierke presented first reflections on his new project in the RS on artworlds. Fellow Samuel Ndogo (ACC Moi) presented findings from his own project on Kenyan popular art, which he had worked on during his stay in Bayreuth.

On the last day, Ute Fendler, Gilbert Ndi Shang and Thierry Boudjekeu, who all conduct research in the Cluster project on the Black Atlantic, added the view on worlds through another transoceanic lens. While Ndi Shang examined notions of identity and memory in Cartagena, Colombia, Boudjekeu is working on the slave trade in West African Francophone prose. Fendler's presentation on a performance and installation in Brazil (Qaseilhas), also reflecting links to Africa refracted by the history of slavery, attracted a lot of interest. The discussions were very lively, engaged, and productive. A publication of select papers will appear in the relatively new Africa-based and interdisciplinary *Journal of Literature, Film and Theatre* edited at the ACC Moi. An open access version will be worked out with the library at UBT. The editorial team consists of both scholars from Moi University and the University of Bayreuth.



Clarissa Vierke, Professor of Literatures in African Languages at UBT organised the event.



The workshop participants enjoyed the diverse programme of the event.

Care, Responsibility and Solidarity – The Cluster’s Literature Festival 2020

Text SUSAN ARNDT AND KATHARINA FINK

The tenth anniversary of the Bayreuth Literature Festival of African and African-Diasporic Literatures was held during the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The festival team, however, found new formats to present two interesting days of discussions, readings, music, and academic contributions on the topics of care, responsibility and solidarity.

Care, Responsibility and Solidarity: Narrating Resistance in African and African-Diasporic Arts, Academia and Activism was the theme of the 2020 Digital Literature Festival. Curated by Susan Arndt, Professor of English Studies and Anglophone Literatures at the University of Bayreuth, and Katharina Fink, Deputy Director of Iwalewahaus,

the festival took place over the course of two days on 3 and 4 July 2020. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the organisational team chose a Zoom room as the most fitting modus operandi for bringing together the participants and streaming the festival’s proceedings both on YouTube and Facebook. Chosen for its ongoing relevance in a changing society and an academic landscape affected by COVID-19, the guiding theme of ‘care’ wove together academic contributions, poetry, music, and book discussions. The contributions also included a presentation of the book *Ghosts, Spectres, Revenants: Hauntology* as a means to think and feel the future, which emerged from a previously active Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies working group.

Both days of the festival opened with

brilliant keynotes, and featured readings and performances by emerging and famous authors. Some of the many highlights of the festival were the appearances of the pan-African poet and novelist Véronique Tadjo and renowned Kenyan writer and scholar Ngugi wa Thiong’o. On day one, the keynote was delivered by Christine Vogt-William, Director of the Cluster of Excellence’s Gender and Diversity Office, who talked about intersectional responsibility in times of COVID-19. On day two, the audience was presented an interesting keynote by Amanda Gouws, Professor of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, who discussed COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement in the context of the festival’s theme. A welcome address was also given on the first day by the Cluster’s Vice Dean of Research, Erdmute Alber.

Over the course of the two days, the festival featured three interesting panel discussions: BLM in the USA, Queer Care, and Decolonisation. This year, the festival also presented a mourning slot that focused on the victims and circumstances of anti-black police violence. Each day concluded with an evening concert, rounding up the heavy discussions and lending them an embodied depth. The festival also featured a dance event, as a playful inquiry into the somatic impact of holding events online. The clear highlights of each evening were the lectures given by two very prominent contemporary intellectuals: Achille Mbembe and Alice Hasters. The researcher, educator and artist Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja was in attendance throughout the festival, taking notes and collecting material for a possible zine publication with Iwalewabooks.

The festival had live audiences of 30 to 170 people during the event, while the documentation videos on social media and YouTube have received over 1,000 hits since then.

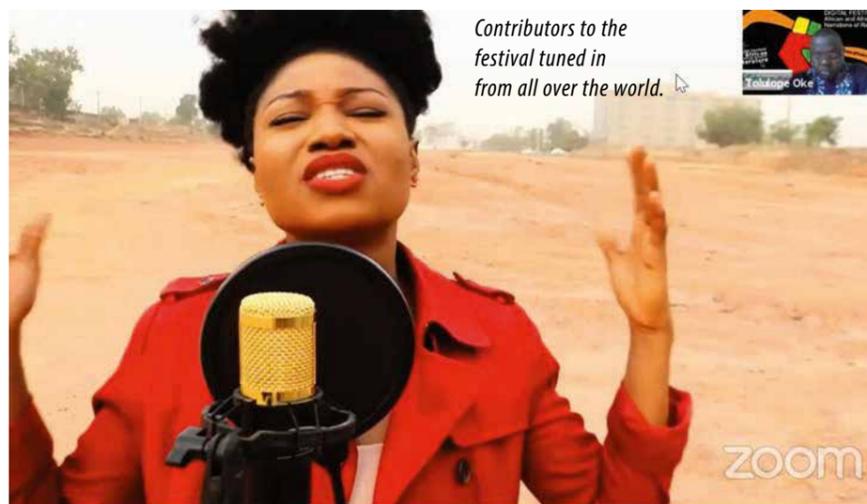
While the digital format was borne out of the necessity to find solutions for the challenges that the global pandemic entails, the festival team also considers the new form to be a blessing in disguise: “The new format posed a challenge but also brought beautiful new perspectives. During our first experience with a digital festival of this magnitude we were able to identify the possibilities the digital world has to offer. For the future, we intend to host the festival in a hybrid format, combining live and online events to broaden and diversify our audience,” Arndt explained. 🌍



Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o



Poet and novelist Véronique Tadjo



Contributors to the festival tuned in from all over the world.



The Cluster’s head office and Digital Solutions team was responsible for the technical aspects of the event. (Photo: Sabine Greiner)



The Black Lives Matter movement was at the core of the festival’s topics.



Festival curator Susan Arndt

Mbongeni Buthelezi

— Art Meets Science

Art Meets Science was the motto of the artist residency of the South African Mbongeni Buthelezi at the University of Bayreuth. At the invitation of the Collaborative Research Centre 1357 Microplastics, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Iwalewahaus, and Friends of Iwalewahaus e.V., Buthelezi was once again a guest in Bayreuth in February 2020, after first getting to know the city and the university in summer 2019.

27.02.–
06.03.2020

His spectacular painting style has attracted worldwide attention. Buthelezi processes collected plastic waste. By heating foil with a heat gun, he glues the soft material together to create a new work. At first glance, the works look like oil paintings. Buthelezi creates not only portraits, but also huge works on exterior walls that captivate viewers with the intensity of their colours and the characteristic way in which they are shaped artistically. The plastic waste used has an environmental message: not enough is being done about plastic waste worldwide.

A multi-day Science Rally and a series of Art Workshops took place from 27 February 2020. The event formats linked artistic, material-scientific, and environmental approaches to the material of plastic and thus built a bridge between art and science in relation to this highly topical subject. Buthelezi's artist residency also included the first Bayreuth Microplastic Symposium, organised by the Collaborative Research Centre 1357 Microplastics,

as well as a workshop of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence on the topic On Worlds and Artworks. During the events, a much-noticed pop-up gallery in a vacant space in Bayreuth's city centre was realised. This was an impressive way of connecting the artists, the university, and the people of Bayreuth.

Public events provided insights into the artist's work and at the same time into the natural and environmental science aspects of plastic as a material.

Networking and cooperation in very different directions could not have been more successful. Buthelezi's artist residency was an ideal demonstration of how art and the natural sciences can work together, and at the same time this wonderful artist and mediator was able to build bridges to the local population and especially to Bayreuth students.

Text // Inken Böbert
Cooperation // Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Collaborative Research Centre 1357 Microplastics, Friends of Iwalewahaus e.V., Iwalewahaus





From Osogbo to Bayreuth and back:

— The Ulli and Georgina Beier Photographic Estate

In February 2020, Iwalewahaus experienced a special day in the history of its international cooperation: On 17 February, the estate of Iwalewahaus founders Ulli and Georgina Beier was ceremoniously handed over by Ulf Vierke, Alexandra Kuhnke, and Lena Naumann to the chairman of the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU), Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola and his team.

The extensive collection of archive material, consisting of approximately 40,000 artefacts such as photographs, negatives, slides, documents, and personal records, finally travelled back to Osogbo, Nigeria after an intensive process of digitisation by Iwalewahaus at the University of Bayreuth.

In 2007, the Beiers sold the archive to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, more precisely, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and National Orientation, to be included as part of the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding under the auspices of UNESCO. The Beiers stipulated that the archive should find its new home in Osogbo after having been digitised and, as such, made accessible for future research by Iwalewahaus.

Regionally, the main quantitative focus of the archival material lies on Nigeria, especially Osogbo, in the southwestern part of Nigeria, where the Beiers lived in the 1950s and 1960s, but other domiciles have also been documented extensively, such as Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Bayreuth, Germany; and Sydney, Australia. Before the Beiers sold the estate to the CBCIU, they gathered all sorts of documents, from family photos to cooking recipes, texts from lecture series, newspaper clippings, drawings, letters, postcards, publications, and copies of artworks. It is striking how consistently Ulli Beier documented the environments where he and his family lived.

Besides the official ceremony, Alexandra Kuhnke and Lena Naumann opened the exhibition *Existential Phantasies – The Monkey On Your Shoulder*, which was conceptualised by Katharina Greven in Bayreuth and curated by research associates and curators Kuhnke and Naumann, together with assistant curators from the CBCIU, in Osogbo. The exhibition gives insight into the fragmented archive of Ulli and Georgina Beier.

Their exhaustive gathering and production of images was not only a testimony to their artistic and political agenda, but also testimony to their personal search for a 'new home': a place of belonging and existence, where they could live out their dreams and fulfil their desires. Osogbo played a crucial role in this search; it determined concepts and modes of living, which they reprised later in Papua New Guinea, in Australia, and even in Germany (see exhibition text by Katharina Greven, 2016).

The cooperation between the CBCIU and Iwalewahaus includes not only the digitisation of the estate, but also an extensive scientific exchange and trainee programs in the field of archive and museum work.

Osogbo and its artistic scene is today considered a brand within the discourses on modern Nigerian art, known internationally especially for the artists who emerged from the workshops organized by the Beiers, like Twins Seven Seven, Rufus Ogundele, Muraina Oyelami, Jacob Afolabi, Jimoh Buraimoh, and Bisi Fabunmi – their artworks comprise the core of the Iwalewahaus collection of modern art from Africa.

Osogbo and Bayreuth share a history that is almost 40 years old, which will be maintained through the cooperation between Iwalewahaus and CBCIU and which provides a significant contribution to current discourses within the future.

Text // Inken Böbert, Lena Naumann
 Curator // Katharina Greven, Alexandra Kuhnke, Lena Naumann
 Curatorial Assistance // Babatunde Akangbe, Olufemi Gbeola
 Project Advisory // Ulf Vierke, Augustus Ajibola
 Project Coordination and Logistics // Lena Naumann
 Cooperation // CBCIU



Photos: ©Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth

Sommerlabor

— (Summer Lab):

Odin's Song
Life Classes
Stacey Gillian Abe Indigogo
Enchasing Yorùbá
Hidden Persuaders

the title says it all. In the lab, people experiment, investigate, research, and publish the results. Iwalewahauss, known for innovative and visionary exhibitions of African modern art, devotes itself to issues of the day together with artists and scientists. 'Form' was chosen as the overarching theme this year. Form as an external, sensually perceptible design and its relationship to content is a fundamental theme of art. In times of social movement, the language of form can anticipate upheavals. The "Sommerlabor" exhibition comprises several projects, including five independent exhibition areas.

Text // Inken Böbert
Curator Programme // Katharina Fink

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06.09.2020



Foto © Stacey Gillian Abe



Photo: @Iwalewahauss, University of Bayreuth

Museum Visit via Poster

Iwalewahauss with first
augmented reality
poster in Bayreuth

The exhibition was ready and no one was allowed in: This happened to many museums. But many of them came up with an alternative, and Iwalewahauss in Bayreuth was one of them. The exhibition was called Sommerlabor (Summer Laboratory) and covered five topics. It was filmed, but not simply put on the internet: It could be experienced via poster. The curators went through the Sommerlabor with a cameraman and put together one- to two-minute video sequences.

On the poster for the exhibition there was a reference to an app from ARTIVIVE. If an interested viewer downloads this app onto a mobile device, then looks at the poster again with a mobile phone or tablet, something surprising happens: The exhibit becomes tangible. It is the first poster in Bayreuth with augmented reality. Normally, this technology is used in museums themselves and creates a sensation. But when a crisis situation does not allow a visit to the art inside, the art has to come outside. New video sequences linked to the poster provided variety at regular intervals.

Text // Inken Böbert

African Stories on Metal

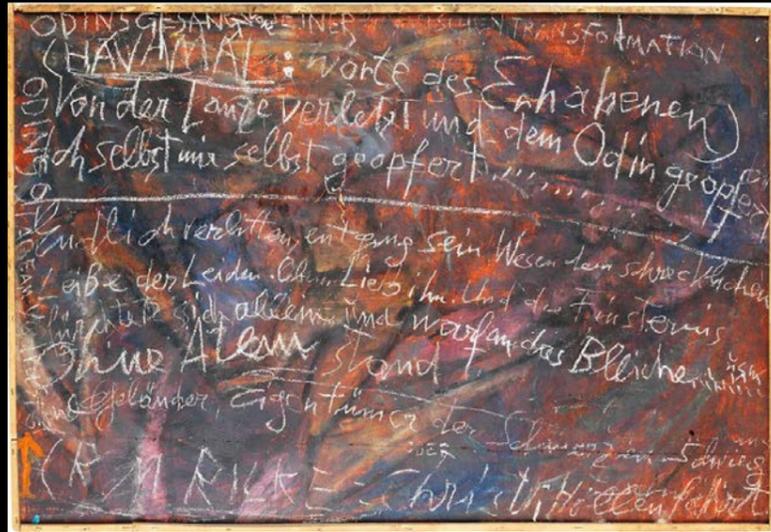
Iwalewahauss showed
the exhibition
Enchasing Yorùbá

The exhibition Sommerlabor (Summer laboratory) comprises five themed exhibitions. One of them is Enchasing Yorùbá, which shows artworks by Asiru Olatunde (Nigeria, 1918–1993).

Olatunde was concerned with telling stories of the Yorùbá in Nigeria, clarifying beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles. The artist worked with aluminum plates on which he drove, hammered, and carved his pictures. This created artworks of unique aesthetics whose narrative character virtually invites visitors to "read" what is depicted. Olatunde leads the viewer through the world of the Yoruba with his folk inspiration deeply rooted in his homeland. He saw the country and its people through the eyes of a blacksmith who uses art techniques that had been almost forgotten. The working of the metal plates requires a vivid imagination and a lot of precision. The results are ingenious works of wonder. They all come from the art collection of Iwalewahauss, which houses artworks from the Osogbo art movement to which Olatunde also belonged.

Text // Inken Böbert

Curator // Francois Regis Hitimana



Susanne Wenger Odin's Song

The creation of the world is ongoing. There is no beginning and no end, everything dies into be reborn, everything is born to die. Life and culture grow like grass, life and its meaning never repeats.

Susanne Wenger, born 1915 in Graz, Austria, came to Nigeria in 1950, where she lived as an artist and priestess of the Yoruba religion until her death in 2009. Her artistic work included sculptures, textiles, paintings, and drawings, in which she devoted herself especially to religious, spiritual, and mythical expression. Her credo: art is ritual. *Odin's Song vor seiner mythischen Transformation* depicts the self-sacrifice of Odin, the powerful father of the gods in Germanic mythology. In his quest for knowledge and insight, Odin not only sacrificed one of his eyes and thus half of his sight, but also hanged himself for nine days and nights on the world tree Yggdrasil in order to attain greater wisdom and absorb the knowledge of the runes, the ancient Germanic characters. On the back of the painting is an excerpt from the runic song of Odin as part of the Havamal Old Norse poem. Odin's self-sacrifice is often interpreted as symbolic death, and his transformation as a resurrection, and for this reason is associated with Christian symbolism. Wenger, who often used her picture titles as "meditation texts", associates the Havamal with Rainer Maria Rilke's "Christi Höllenfahrt" (Christ's Descent into Hell), from which a few lines can also be found on the

reverse. Life and change, death and finitude, sacrifice and gain, knowledge and truth are the major aspects of this painting, which has been in the Iwalewaha collection since the beginning of 2020 and was shown in Bayreuth for the first time.

Text // Lena Naumann
Curator // Lena Naumann



Photos: @Iwalewaha, University of Bayreuth

Stacey Gillian Abe:
Indigogo



Stacey Gillian Abe Indigogo

"Metamorphosis through Indigogo is a biological process by which the artist physically or virtually develops during hibernation, hatching, or rebirth, involving a conspicuous and relatively abrupt shift back and forth in its anatomy and mental state through cell growth, restructuring and differentiation... It's a pause in motion."
Stacey Gillian Abe



The tangibility of indigo and its significance within the African slave trade serves as a metaphor for the body as an organic form of identity. It becomes pivotal in exploring the tangible and physical properties of character and individuality, an acquired identity, or the state of being shifted or moved from one position to another in an alternate dimension.

Stacey Gillian Abe was the winner of the Iwalewa Art Award 2019. The Iwalewa Art Award is given to young, up-and-coming artists for outstanding artistic achievements, in particular for artistic engagement with the archive and art collection of Iwalewaha. The award is linked to an artist residence and an exhibition co-sponsored by the International Office and Iwalewaha.

Abe's concepts highlight specific complex situations as autobiographical documentation drawn from earlier and ongoing experiences. They attempt to review conventional depictions of her as a black woman by drawing focus to the mind's suppleness. These materialise into created imaginary spaces that instigate a surreal mystical feel to the work as it probes unsettling narratives on the subject of identity, gender, spirituality, and cultural mysticism, in both the past and present.
Text // Stacey Gillian Abe, Lena Naumann, Felicia Nitsche
Curator // Lena Naumann, Felicia Nitsche
Project Coordination // Katharina Fink, Lena Naumann, Felicia Nitsche



Photos: @lwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth

The Virtual Museum

— as a Tactile Experience Space

To assert that the current challenges to museums and cultural institutions are limited to digitisation and hygiene concepts does not go far enough. The democratisation of the museum landscape began to pick up speed as the pandemic slowed this dynamic. Virtual tours and online tours may create alternative access – but for whom and at what price? The renaissance of the authorial narrative is not a phenomenon confined to museums.

Hidden Persuaders

Works of art from the Iwalewahaus collection in the repository and public domain

Works from the Iwalewahaus collection have been snatched from their “hidden” existence in the repository and archive and made accessible to a wider public. The title Hidden Persuaders was chosen in reference to the 1957 documentary by the American publicist Vance Packard (1914–1996). In it, Packard refers to the “grasp for the unconscious in everyone” using the example of the advertising industry.

But what about the example of works of art – when are they considered secret, hidden, and concealed? In the storage facility of a museum or not? What makes them an object of the month or part of the Meet the Art series, both forums of Iwalewahaus to make artworks accessible outside of exhibitions? What role does their subject matter and / or the form of presentation play? And what do they do to the viewer? Do they allow recognition or even identification? Do the works change in their charisma and effect within the exhibition, and if so – how? These questions were explored in the exhibition.

Text and Curator // Sigrid Horsch-Albert
Cooperation // Oberfranken Stiftung

Life Classes

An exhibition of works on paper from Uganda

Featuring Ugandan art works on paper recently added to the Iwalewahaus collection, the exhibition takes the form of an active thought laboratory. Through the graphic art collection of Klaus Betz, acquired in Kampala from the 1970s to the 1990s, the exhibit illustrates lesser-known aspects of the social fabric of Uganda and reveals how research serves as a vital form of exhibition-making.

Text and Curator // Martha Kazungu,
Katrin Peters-Klaphake



After the digital metamorphosis, it takes place via social media, so it seems to be modern and innovative – and what museum doesn't like that? The month of May contains not only International Museum Day but also the European Day for Inclusion. A good reason to think about the expanded possibilities of digitisation.

On 17 May 2000, the first virtual tour took place in Iwalewahaus. With the sonorous title Musée Imaginaire, the guests were received digitally. The format had little to do with the universal aesthetic fantasies by André Malraux and Aby Warburg. Rather, the current requirements with regard to the restricted analogue accessibility of the newly opened exhibition floor demand that the possibilities of digital accessibility be explored. Primarily blind and visually impaired guests took part in the premiere of the 'imaginary museum'. The tour with detailed picture descriptions was broadcast in an online conference. In a preparatory meeting; the technical requirements were tested and did not pose any insurmountable barriers.

The video conference also proved to be a useful medium for an audience with limited visual perception. Participants with residual eyesight can use the screen profitably. Exchanges about art can be made more open and communicative. This experience resulted in a series of virtual tours with museum content, despite the days of lockdown. A workshop enriched the Musée Imaginaire with tactile media. In 2020, this innovation was still experimental. As a vision for 2021, it sets new standards for our curatorial ambitions.

Text // Philipp Schramm

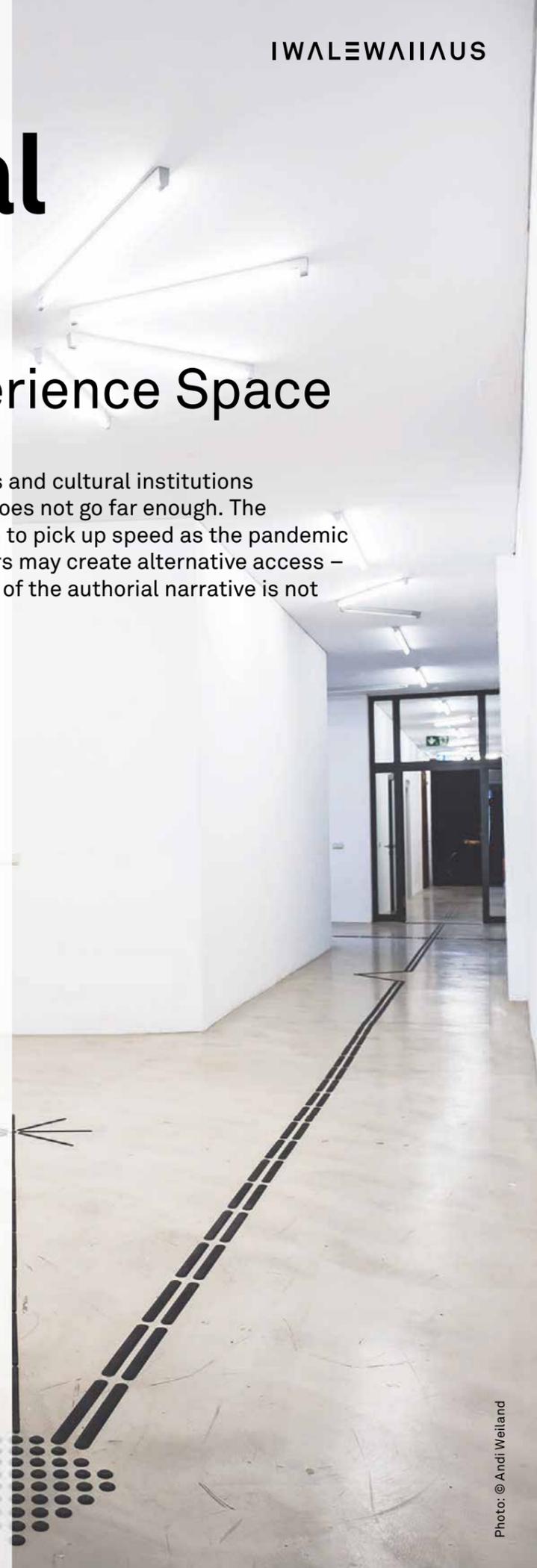


Photo: © Andi Weiland

The 2020 Activities of the African Cluster Centres in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa

The international research community around the world was simultaneously affected by the pandemic that swept over the globe in early 2020. Events had to be postponed or switched to another format and plans for research activities had to

be altered. The Cluster's African Cluster Centres (ACCs) at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Moi University in Eldoret (Kenya), University of Lagos (Nigeria) and Rhodes University in Makhanda (South

Africa) were no exception. However, all four ACCs soon resourcefully adapted to the challenges that COVID-19 imposed on their work and successfully continued with their endeavours as the reports on the following pages show impressively.

Participants of the workshop on project writing received a certificate.

Text YACOUBA BANHORO

In Burkina Faso, the pandemic immobilised the teaching and research actors from March to May 2020. In spite of this challenge, the ACC of the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo of Ouagadougou was able to conduct a series of activities including research, scientific days, and training seminars in 2020.

After the breakout of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso, the pandemic context quickly became part of the African Cluster Centre (ACC) activities at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou (UJKZ) in 2020.

Three Cluster of Excellence Research Projects

The first project, led by Fernand Bationo, focused on *Screening, Care Pathways and COVID-19 in Ouagadougou*. It mapped the screening centres in Ouagadougou opened during the first months of the epidemic to see which Ouagadougou inhabitants were being screened, for what purpose, and what the representations of COVID-19 and the screening entailed. The conclusion was that candidates for screening were mainly a few people planning to travel abroad.

The second study, conducted by the director of the ACC at UJKZ, Yacouba Banhoro, examined government measures, the reception of these measures among socio-professional categories, the representations of COVID-19, and the impacts of the epidemic control measures on the artisanal mining sector in Burkina Faso. After describing the representations within different professional categories, the study showed how the government decision to stop activities and travel (the lockdown) was interpreted differently

and executed, but also how the economic contraction occurred and affected small-scale actors in the mining sector more compared to more affluent actors.

The third study, conducted by Natewinde Sawadogo, focused on *Epidemics and Modernity in Burkina Faso: Professional Differentiation, Resilience, and Engagement*. It focused on occupational differentiation in Ouagadougou, and how this has created categories of people who are more vulnerable than others.

Panel on Global Health

Around COVID-19 again, and reflecting on one of the research projects on *Global health and health policies in Africa*, the ACC organised a panel around the theme: *Institutions specialised in global health governance in the face of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)* in Burki-

na Faso. Three panelists made presentations: Banhoro introduced global health and its characteristics. Alimata J. Diarra-Nama, the WHO representative in Burkina Faso, addressed the role of the WHO in the fight against COVID-19, including sharing new science-based information with national health authorities, mobilising international partners to support Burkina Faso, raising funds to contribute financially and materially to the fight against COVID-19, and operationalising COVID-19 screening centres. Issiaka Sombié, who came from Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, made a presentation on the West African Health Organisation and its involvement and contribution in terms of health information, financial and material resources, as well as support and advice to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).



(Photos: ACC Ouagadougou)

Scientific Conference on COVID-19: African ACC /Africa Multiple - ARES - UJKZ Still seeking an understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACC, joining its efforts to those of the UJKZ and the Belgian-Burkinabe cooperation project Higher Academy of Research and Education (ARES) co-organised a scientific conference on COVID-19. About fifty presentations were made on the ongoing research at the UJKZ and elsewhere. It was an interdisciplinary symposium bringing together families of sciences including mainly the humanities, medical and biological sciences, and mathematics. Not only did this colloquium provide an overview of the research conducted in Burkina Faso as well as the provisional results, but it also showed the importance of

ACC Ouagadougou: University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso

interdisciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity in the face of the pandemic. Members of the ACC are working with their colleagues on the editing of the proceedings.

Call for Papers COVID-19

Finally, COVID-19 mobilised researchers from the five African Cluster Centres. A collective volume coordinated by Susan Arndt, Yacouba Banhoro, Enocent Msindo, Taibat Lawanson, and Peter Simatei which began in April 2020 is being edited. Nearly 30 articles have been selected and are currently being reviewed and corrected. COVID-19 was the global event in 2020 that had a special significance for all countries. It caused not only lockdowns, but it was also a source of inspiration for many researchers around the world. Through research, the members of the ACC have gained more knowledge about pandemics, their societal impacts, as well as policies and strategies to combat them.

ACC Call for Papers: *The Problem of Illness in African Literature*

Throughout 2020, members of the ACC have been working on several calls for papers for collective volumes. One of this series is on *The Problem of Illness in African Literature*. The articles selected for publication in this volume have been reviewed by the authors and in total, about ten articles by African and

European authors of the Africa Multiple system will constitute the book which is ready to be published.

Cultural Heritage Week

The activities of the ACC were extended to various other events including a Cultural Heritage Week. Over the course of a week, cultural heritage specialists from the Ministry of Culture, universities, and other organisations such as the National Museum of Ouagadougou met at the UJKZ. The aim was not only to have a state of scientific knowledge on cultural heritage in Burkina Faso, but also to see the possibilities of future studies. An exhibition of Salfo Dermé's artworks was held, a first at the UJKZ. This exhibition attracted many visitors, including Alkassou Maiga, the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation of Burkina Faso. An evening of mask dance performance also took place.

This week allowed researchers, cultural professionals, and students to get to know each other and to exchange ideas on the management of cultural heritage in Burkina Faso.

Workshop of Knowledge of the *Boutique des sciences*

Under the supervision of Bationo, a workshop on the discovery and knowledge of the science shop was organised by the ACC. It was punctuated with theoretical presentations on scientific knowledge and practical discovery of numerous tools based on the internet allowing research and bibliographic classification.

Scientific Day on the African Continental Free Trade Area

A scientific day was organised on the African Continental Free Trade Area, which came into force in 2021. Presentations were made by national and inter-

national academic experts, practitioners from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Ministry and the Chamber of Commerce of Burkina Faso, among others. Participants could learn and interact with the experts, analysing and discussing the opportunities and challenges of this new zone for UEMOA countries.

Research Methodology Seminar

In preparation for a socio-anthropological research project on endogenous community sources of dialogue and peace against terrorism in Burkina Faso, a methodological seminar was organised by the ACC in the nearby city of Koudougou. This allowed academics and participants from different socio-professional categories to retreat and exchange on the issue of terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel, and to familiarise themselves with more tools and resource persons that can help in the collection of field data.

Financial Support for Doctoral Student and Early Careers

The ACC granted financial assistance to five doctoral students and eight post-doctoral students, some to complete their theses, others to conduct a research project for the publication of scientific articles.

The ACC has organised a training workshop in project writing for the benefit of members and doctoral and post-doctoral students receiving financial support.

Through these activities, the ACC of the UJKZ, in addition to the three projects acquired in 2020 and whose research activities are ongoing, has carried out many activities in an interdisciplinary framework. COVID-19 has been at the centre of concerns in terms of health security, but it has also been the locus of many scientific interests beyond the disciplines and research sections of the Cluster.



Yacouba Banhoro welcomes participants of Cultural Heritage Week.

Text MUYIWA FALAIYE

The African Cluster Centre (ACC) at the University of Lagos (UNILAG) looks back on an eventful and successful year 2020, strengthening its research focus within the Cluster of Excellence by organising a number of events and welcoming new researchers.

PI Lecture Series

To sustain the research focus and agenda of the Cluster, the Lagos ACC organised a monthly lecture series in 2020 featuring ten lectures by the ACC's principal investigators (PIs) and the fellows of the Lagos ACC.

Research Projects and Results 2020

As part of the Lagos ACC projects, the ACC team organised two workshops and a month-long exhibition as well as a round table. The first workshop's theme was *Methodology for Doing Cutting Edge Research in African Studies* and took place from 10 to 11 December 2019. Most of the participants were doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars from the UNILAG.

Facilitators came from various disciplines in UNILAG, with Peter Ndege from Moi University, Kenya as lead presenter.

The second workshop was woven around developing a curriculum at the level of basic education. The workshop, entitled *Beyond Pedagogy: Purposeful and Sustainable Learning in Africa*, was held between 24 to 27 August 2020. Participants were drawn from undergraduate students and scholars in all the faculties of UNILAG. Facilitators were drawn from UNILAG academia and practitioners in the industry, with technical personnel from the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The keynote was delivered by Rose Ruto-Korir from the Moi University ACC, Eldoret, Kenya.

The third project was a month-long exhibition, roundtables and documentary on *Lagos: Ownership and Identities*. It was organised in November 2020 by Lagos ACC PIs Taibat Lawanson and Abisoye Eleshin, and co-sponsored by the Lagos ACC. The group of participants and facilitators were scholars from all sorts of spe-

cialties such as traditional historians, cultural enthusiasts, artists/photographers, and students.

Cluster Research Grants

Lagos ACC researchers and PIs were awarded five research grants from the ACC. The projects and lead PIs are:

Peju Layiwola – Rethinking the Artistic Trajectory of African Women Artists

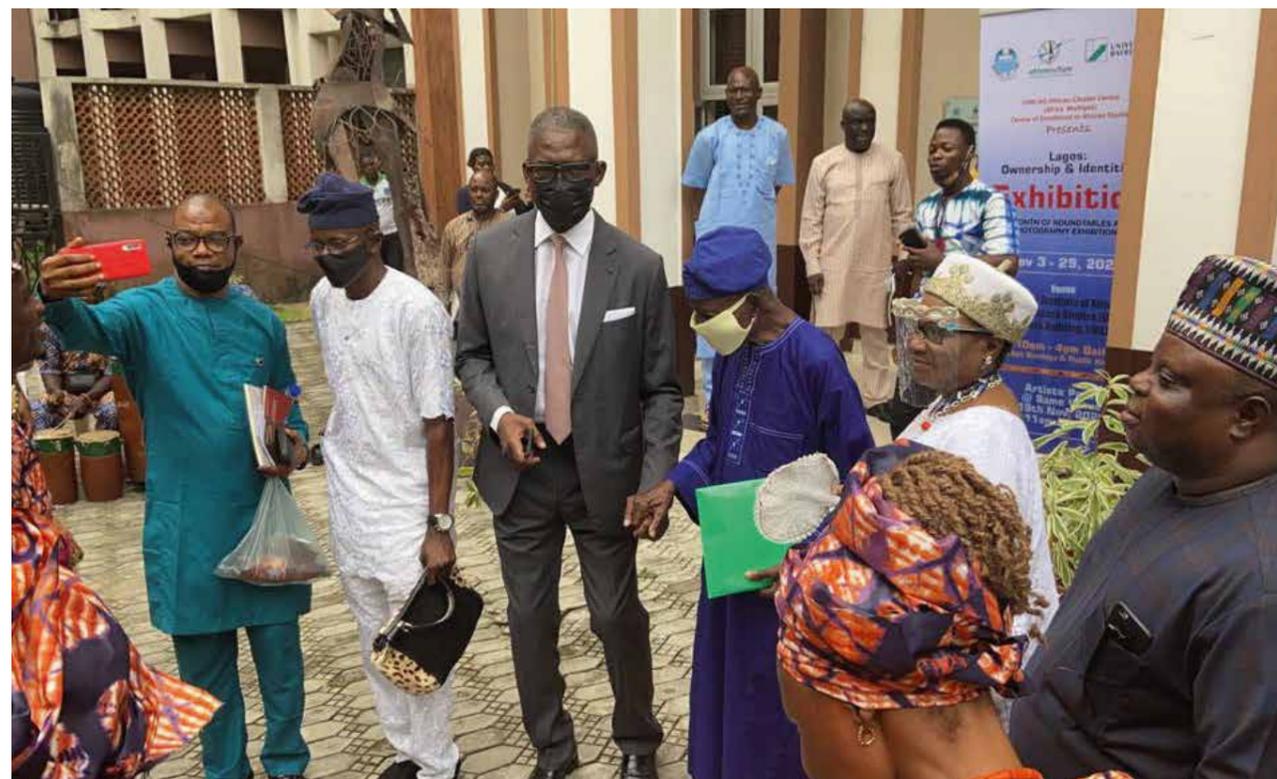
Muyiwa Falaiye – Women as Sages: Exploring the Nature and Value of Feminine Wisdom

Ayodele Yusuff – Digitising Yoruba Folktales for Animation and Value Education

Franca Attoh – Intra-Africa Migration and Xenophobia: Imperative for African Integration

Patrick Oloko – African Popular Arts and Entertainment.

At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lagos ACC funded research done by Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko and Ademola Kazeem Fayemi. The project was titled: *The Informal Workers also Fight COVID-19*. The project was done between September and December 2020, and the output will be part of the Cluster's COVID-19 book project.



At the opening of the one-month long photography exhibition of the Lagos Ownership and Identities

(Photos: ACC Lagos)

Table 1: The Principal Investigators' Lecture series at ACC Lagos in 2020

Date	Paper	Lecturer	Research Section
10 February 2020	<i>African Studies in African Universities</i>	Muyiwa Falaiye	Knowledges
13 March 2020	<i>African Languages as Tool of Development in Africa</i>	Ayodele Yusuff	Learning
13 May 2020	<i>Odu Ifa Ose Meji: Orunmila's cosmological deconstruction of political violence stereotype in Ibadan</i>	Kayode Eesuola	Knowledges
10 June 2020	<i>Moralities: Religious Exclusivism and Logical Implication of Religious Pluralism: The Nigerian Context</i>	Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko	Moralities
15 July 2020	<i>Artificial Demarcations, Natural Language: Yoruba in West Africa and its Implications for Research Prospects In African Studies</i>	Abisoye Eleshin	Knowledges
19 August 2020	<i>Cultural Referencing in Selected Online COVID-19 Jokes</i>	Feyi Ademola-Adeoye	Arts & Aesthetics
16 September 2020	<i>Alternative Urbanisms? How Religion is Redefining Planning and Development In Lagos, Nigeria</i>	Taibat Lawanson	Moralities
14 October 2020	<i>ICT Aided Mobility and Migration in West Africa: Imperative for Integration</i>	Franca Attoh	Mobilities
18 November 2020	<i>The African Court on Human and Peoples' Right: An Election Court?</i>	Illy Oussen	Visiting Fellow
16 December 2020	<i>Beyond Syncretism to Acquiring 'Faith-skill': Exploring Religious Hybridism for Survival</i>	Tony Okeregbe	Learning

New Principal Investigators

Lagos ACC added two new PIs to the team, bringing the total number of PIs to 16. The new PIs are Olufunke Adeboye, Professor of Social History and incumbent Dean of Arts, and Moses Yakubu, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Lagos ACC Awards (Fellowships and Scholarships)

The Lagos ACC started a fellowship scheme in 2020, and awarded Oussen Illy a two-month Fellowship (October–November 2020). Illy is an Associate Professor of Law at the Thomas Sankara University (formerly the University of Ouagadougou), Burkina Faso, and a Principal Investigator of the Ouagadougou ACC, Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, Burkina Faso. His research focus for the Fellowship was the re-examination of the mandate and mission of the African Court of Justice and the African Continental Free Trade Area. Obádélé Kambon of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana in Legon, was also awarded the Lagos ACC Fellowship for 2020.



Bisoye Eleshin showing the students of the International School Lagos (ISL) round at the art gallery during the Lagos Ownership and Identities workshop

In addition to the Fellowship scheme, Lagos ACC awarded two doctoral scholarships to Bamidele Alabi of the Political Science department, and Ayodeji Adedara of the English department, both

UNILAG. The scholarship scheme is aimed at supporting young promising researchers who are engaged in research related to African Studies and the overarching agenda of the Cluster.



Participants of a workshop on the topic of Mobilities
(Photos: ACC Moi)

Text PETER SIMATEI

The year 2020 started on a hopeful note for the Moi University African Cluster Centre (ACC). Establishing the ACC occupied much of 2019. By the end of the year, Moi University researchers had started participating in Cluster activities. A handful had joined teams undertaking research projects based in the University of Bayreuth; one researcher took up a Fellowship there. Peter Ndege was a Keynote Speaker in an ACC workshop at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. These developments had given Moi University faculty engaged in African Studies an indication of the possibilities in the Africa Multiple. Thus, when a Call for Project Proposals came up in March 2020, the response was enthusiastic.

February 2020 found researchers based in the ACC busy working away at project proposals they hoped would win funding by the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. As this was happening, other activities of the ACC took off. The Africa Colloquium, the sem-

Table 1: List of research project proposals submitted by researchers based in the ACC Moi

Project Title	Applicant	Research Section
Regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa: An appraisal of factors that influence regional integration in Africa: The case of East African community (EAC)	Ken Oluoch	Affiliations
East African Asian writing and the emergence of a diasporic subjectivity	Peter Simatei	Arts and Aesthetics
"Mediated and mediatisation of Islamic knowledge in Kenya: Educational institutions, media technologies and performative aesthetics	Hassan Ndzovu	Learning
Framing identities from human agency mobility on the Kenya-Uganda highway	Omar Egesah	Mobilities
Changing life projects: African identities, moralities and wellbeing	Eunice Kamaara	Moralities

inar series of the ACC, kicked off on 6 February 2020. From 19 to 21 February

ACC Moi: Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

2020, the ACC held its first conference, *Reconfiguring African Studies*. Muiyiwa Falaye, Director of the ACC at the Uni-

versity of Lagos, and Enocent Msindo, Director of the ACC at Rhodes University, South Africa, gave keynote addresses at the conference. On 10 March 2020, Franz Kogelmann, Managing Director of Africa Multiple, and Maria Hennig, the Quality Assurance Manager, visited Moi University and held a talk with the university's Vice-Chancellor, Isaac Kosgey, on the ongoing establishment of the ACC at the institution. All these ac-

Table 2: Program of the Africa Colloquium 2020

Date	Paper Title	Presenter
06.02.2020	<i>The Kenyan Writer and the Discourse of Development</i>	Martina Kopf University of Vienna, Austria
27.02.2020	<i>Towards the Democratisation of Knowledge Production: The "Shared Authority" Approach in Social Science Research</i>	Daniela Waldburger University of Vienna, Austria
27.08.2020	<i>Prospects and Challenges of East African Common Market Protocol</i>	Henry Kibet Mutai Kenya School of Law, Kenya
03.09.2020	<i>Nganya Rides: Travel Imaginaries in Matatu Transport in Ongata Rongai, Kenya</i>	Miriam Maranga-Musonye University of Nairobi, Kenya
10.09.2020	<i>Strange Fruit: Election Violence as Ritual</i>	Wandia Njoya Daystar University, Kenya
24.09.2020	<i>The Evolution of Learning in the Islamic Tradition and its Parallels in Other Ancient Traditions</i>	Mohamed Bakari Raf International University, Kenya
01.10.2020	<i>On the Aesthetics of Language</i>	Daniel Ochieng' Orwenjo The Technical University of Kenya, Kenya
15.10.2020	<i>The Challenge of COVID-19 on Identity, Morality and Well-being in Kenya: An African Culture Based Analysis</i>	Mary Getui Catholic University of East Africa, Kenya
15.10.2020	<i>Conceptualising African Studies in Shifting Theoretical Frameworks</i>	Kembo Sure Rongo University, Kenya
22.10.2020	<i>Academic Mobility for Sustainable University/ Higher Education in Africa</i>	Anne Nangulu Bomet University College, Kenya
29.10.2020	<i>Mainstreaming Kiswahili in the East African Community Agenda for Regional Integration and Sustainable Development</i>	Caroline Asimwe Makerere University, Uganda
05.11.2020	<i>Internationalisation of Academic Mobility in Africa: Annotated Experiences of South-North and South-South Academic Mobility</i>	Yekunoamlak Alemu Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
12.11.2020	<i>Debating Local Moralities: The Case of Land Inheritance in Buganda</i>	Claire Medard-Amutebi Institute of Research and Development - France
26.11.2020	<i>Imagining the Head of State as Poop: Stella Nyanzi's Scatological Aesthetics in No Roses from my Mouth</i>	Danson Kahyana Makerere University, Uganda
03.12.2020	<i>Knowledge, Learning and Teachings from the Friday Khutuba of Shaykh Al-Amin b. Ali Al-Mazru'i, 1890-1947</i>	Hassan Mwakimako Pwani University, Kenya

The Cluster's managing director Franz Kogelmann and Quality Assurance manager Maria Hennig at a visit at ACC Moi



tivities, interactions, and conversations were firming up the identity of the ACC as an African Studies research hub.

Then COVID-19 happened. The disruption was massive. There was a complete stoppage of work at Moi University, as in all the educational institutions in Kenya.

The second quarter of 2020 thus had an inauspicious beginning. Over the quarter, the interactions with researchers in the other Centres in the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence – University of Bayreuth; University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ougadougou, Burkina Faso; University of Lagos; Rhodes University – would be severely curtailed. Logically, the programs planned from the ACC – like Fellowships, etc. – were put on hold. In the meantime, Moi University and the entire university sector in Kenya struggled to adapt to the new circumstances. The university explored ways to use the available digital technology to deliver curricula and run other university programs.

The most important activity at the ACC at this point was the writing of the project proposals. At the end of the second quarter, in June 2020, the awarding of proposal funding was announced. Five research project proposals by researchers based in the ACC had made it in the

Table 3: List of workshop at ACC Moi in 2020

Date	Conference/ Workshop
19.02.2020 – 21.02.2020	Reconfiguring African Studies (The Launch of the Moi University African Cluster Centre)
27.08.2020	Moi University Management Board (MUMB) – Moi University African Cluster Centre (ACC Moi)
29.10.2020 – 30.10.2020	Music, Identity, and History: Reading Kalenjin Popular/ Traditional Music
05.11.2020 – 06.11.2020	Reimagining Kenyan Film: Technologies, Aesthetics, Traditions, Publics and Meanings
15.12.2020 – 17.12.2020	Moi University African Cluster Centre Retreat 2020

highly competitive bidding (see table 1): Planning for the commencement of actual research was fine-tuned even as discussions continued whether the research projects that won funding could start in the social environment created to manage the spread of the virus. The team working on *Framing identities from human agency mobility on the Kenya-Uganda highway* saw an opportunity in the impact of containment measures on human mobilities that could extend their work. They went to the field in early August. Later that same month, the Africa Colloquium resumed in a new, hybrid (part face-to-face, part online) format whose reach enhances

the kind of connections that the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence aspires to create and sustain. For the program of the Africa Colloquium see table 2. In conclusion, in 2020, the Moi ACC was, like other research – and generally all human – organisations, significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects were largely adverse. Fortunately, due to the digital technology available, some work got done at the ACC – work that ensured that the Centre kept its focus on its *raison d'être*. 🌍

Principal Investigators and the director of ACC Moi with visitors from the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence



Text ENOCENT MSINDO

2020 started on a very promising note with many programmes lined up, including seminars, colloquiums, and research visits.

The Rhodes University Africa Cluster Centre (ACC) in Makhanda, South Africa started off the year with a visit from 3 to 7 March from the Cluster of Excellence's Vice Deans Ute Fendler and Erdmute Alber; they both presented and reflected on their work at a seminar that the Centre organised.

Their work was well received and their visit invaluable in helping colleagues at the Centre to gain deeper insights into what the Cluster Africa Multiple was about. Visiting Fellowships and an inter-institutional PhD program were discussed, and these are possibilities that the ACC is keen to pursue, but these ideas were hampered by the sudden spread of the corona virus pandemic across the world. Fendler and Alber also had the opportunity to visit the Art Gallery of the National Research Foundation Chair and the *Art and Artivism* project Principal Researcher, Ruth Simbao, witnessing a diversity of artwork from graduate students from across Africa as well as China.

Decision for self-care

The ACC Rhodes had planned a number of colloquiums, seminars, and workshops,



Enocent Msindo with Elmon Chauke, Research Assistant at Makuleke, October 2020

The projects are at different stages of research and require different kinds of fieldwork and data gathering. Watkins could not travel outside of South Africa to conduct research on musical archives. He had to make do with request-



A goma/dhamal group. (Photo: Rajesh Kumar)

which were cancelled as a gesture of 'self-care' in the light of the sudden imposition of a prolonged lockdown for the greater part of 2020. In hindsight, the ACC was not quick enough to think of switching to online formats of conferencing, which has now become the norm.

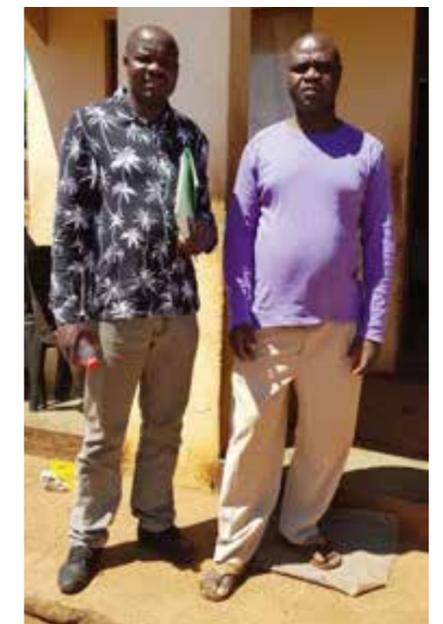
Research proposals

In 2020, four colleagues from the Rhodes ACC submitted short-term research proposals for consideration for funding to the Africa Multiple headquarters at the University of Bayreuth. All of them were successful, thanks to their commitment and to the strong internal review processes overseen by the Director and the rest of the team at the ACC. Nelson Odume submitted a proposal to examine issues of people-river relationalities covering specific case studies in Nigeria and South Africa. Ruth Simbao submitted a project on *Art and Artivism*, which explores the various ways in which art is deployed to speak to contemporary social and political cultures. Lee Watkins' proposal was on archiving the musical sounds of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean. Lastly, the director of the ACC Rhodes, Enocent Msindo, is working with a diverse team of scholars across Africa and also from UBT to examine the experiences of communities on the margins of African states.

ACC Rhodes: Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa

ing his PhD student, Rajesh Kumar, who was locked down in India, to visit some communities and record their musical performances once the lockdown was eased locally in India.

A colloquium planned by Enocent Msindo had to be cancelled. Two of the research collaborators undertook short research visits: Bongani Gumbo in Botswana and Yacouba Cissao in Burkina Faso. Towards the end of October, when the lockdown was eased a bit, Msindo visited the borderlands of South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe to collect some oral information on the experiences of VaTsonga with the colonial state and narratives of marginalisation, as well as their coping mechanisms after displacement from the Kruger National Park.



Enocent Msindo with Elmon Chauke, Research Assistant at Makuleke, October 2020

Simbao and Odume had to postpone their fieldwork and planned collaborative research endeavours to 2021 as they assessed the COVID-19 situation. ACC Rhodes is highly optimistic about 2021 and the many activities lined up. 🌍

Web Symposium Series in India:

Mapping Africa's Global Engagement by Reconfiguring African Studies Across the World

Text AARSHI DUA

The African Studies Association of India aims to foster the study, knowledge, and understanding of African affairs in India and Indian affairs in Africa. In pursuit of this goal, the organisation presented a web symposium series in 2020.

The 2020 web symposium series of the African Studies Association of India (ASA) aimed to map emerging 21st century approaches to African Studies in capturing global engagements of resurgent African states under the African Union and its Agenda 2063. The symposium's concept was developed in contrast to the traditional African Studies approach of treating African countries and the region as a dormant recipient of external policies.

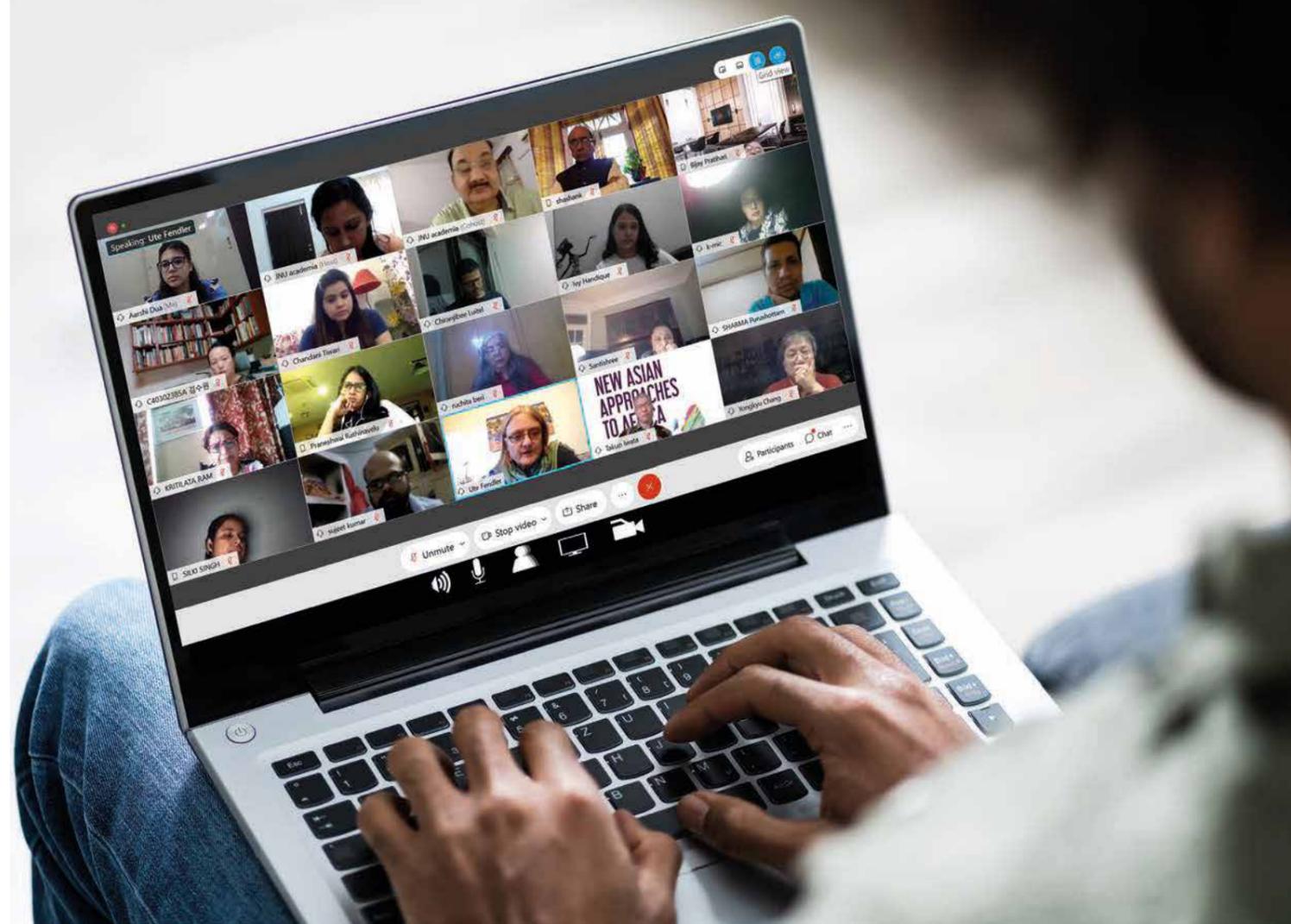
The webinars were conducted under different regional segments. In the future

there will be an Asian, European, North American, Latin American, Australian/New Zealand, Russian/Commonwealth of Independent States, and African-regional segments. Within each region, an attempt will be made to have each webinar discussion on a recent research work on Africa's engagement with the country under discussion. Each web discussion will include, beside the perspective of the country under discussion, a regional perspective, a global perspective, and, most importantly, an African perspective. So far, the South Korean, Japanese, and Danish perspectives were reflected.

ASA organised numerous webinars in collaboration with international universities, e.g., international webinars on *Africa and India During Corona Virus Crisis: New Challenges and Opportunities in Cooperation* organised by the Centre for African Studies (CAS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, in collaboration with ASA India on 15 May 2020. A webinar on *Options of Africa in Corona Crisis Under AFRICOM and Financial Clout of China: Comparative Challenges and Opportunities of Engagement with Global South*, organised by ASA India, in collaboration with CAS-JNU, on 5 June 2020. CAS-JNU and ASA India, hosted a web symposium series on *Mapping Africa's Global Engagement by Reconfiguring African Studies (Discussion Country: South Korea's Africa Engagement)*. Jointly organised by CAS-JNU, and ASA India in collaboration with Institute of Africa Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), South Korea, on 10 October 2020. CAS-JNU and ASA India hosted a web symposium series on *Mapping Africa's Global Engagement by Reconfiguring African Studies (Discussion Country: Japan's*

Africa Engagement). Jointly organised by CAS-JNU and ASA India in collaboration with the Institute of International Relations and Area Studies, Ritsumeikan University, Japan, on 5 December 2020. CAS-JNU and ASA India hosted a web symposium series on *Mapping Africa's Global Engagement by Reconfiguring African Studies (Discussion Country: Denmark's Africa Engagement)*. Jointly organised by CAS-JNU and ASA India in collaboration with the Department of Global Studies, Aarhus University and Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark on 30 January 2021.

The speaker list included lecturers from all over the world who participated in the ASA webinars. These included M. Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor, JNU; Ute Fendler, Chair of Francophone Literatures, Cultures, and Media in Africa, University of Bayreuth, Germany; Yongkyu Chang, Director, Institute of African Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), South Korea; Ajay Dubey, Chair, Centre for African Studies, JNU and Secretary-General, ASA India, New Delhi; Shashank, former Ambassador of India to Denmark, former Foreign Secretary of India, and former visiting professor at CAS-JNU; Annette Skovsted Hansen, associate professor of History at the Global Studies Programme, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University; Karen Lauterbach, associate professor and Director, Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen; Takuo Iwata, professor, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University, Japan; Olutayo C. Adesina, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Scarlett Cornelissen, professor, Department of Political Science, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Manoj Shrestha, professor, Konan University, Kobe, Japan and Chairman, Board of Directors of Japan Africa Asia Partnership Forum (JAAPF); Jeong Kyung Park, Division



The ASA symposium series was held online. (Photo: Adobe Stock, ASA)



(Photo: ASA)

of African Studies, HUFS, South Korea; Nicodemus Fru Awasom, visiting professor, Department of History, University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, Ghana; Suweon Kim, assistant professor, Graduate School of International and Area Studies, HUFS, South Korea; Ben Katoaka, assistant professor, Division of African Studies, HUFS, South Korea; Linas Didvalis, assistant professor, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania; Rasheed Olaniyi, professor, Economic and Social History, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Santishree Pandit, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Savitribai Phule Pune University, India; Masumi Owa, associate professor, School of Global Studies, Chukyo University, Japan; Ruchita Beri, senior research associate, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi and Vice-President, ASA India; Bijay Pratihari, associate professor, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University and Treasurer, ASA India.

About ASA India

ASA India is an all-India apex body of Indian Africanists coming from academics, media, diplomatic services, business, and other professions. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation of scholars whose mandate is to "foster the study, knowledge, and understanding of African affairs in India and Indian affairs in Africa" through research and studies. Founded in 2003, the permanent secretariat of the Association is located in New Delhi. The Association's particular strength is in developing multi-disciplinary approaches, bringing together the expertise of researchers from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities on African issues, through major research projects, seminars, workshops, discussions, symposia, and research colloquia. These programs increase contacts and develop synergies between experts who are currently scattered over many departments, institutes, and colleges across India. ASA encourages the flow of ideas across dif-

ferent disciplines, and provides a base for collaborative projects on African affairs. The Association intends to link up the various African Studies programmes and related associations from all over the world. It has a special emphasis on work as an umbrella organization for African Studies scholars in Asia to promote an Asian perspective on African affairs, facilitating Afro-Asian cooperation. ASA has organised several international conferences, symposia, and seminars. It publishes books on African affairs, Indo-African relations and Afro-Asian cooperation. It has two refereed biannual journals: *Africa Review* (Routledge, London) and *Insight on Africa* (Sage Publications). It also distributes a book series on *Africa's Global Engagement* (published by Palgrave Macmillan). Most of its members have postgraduate degrees in social sciences and humanities with a specialisation in African affairs. A good number of student members are also pursuing advanced studies on Africa.

2020 Fábrica de Ideias – Pandemics and Utopias: Durable Inequalities and Authoritarianism

Text and photo LIVIO SANSONE

Due to COVID-19, the renowned summer school *Fábrica de Ideias* in Bahia, Brazil, had to be postponed and changed to an online format. The first part of the programme titled *Pandemics and Utopias: Durable Inequalities and Authoritarianism* was held between 12 November and 17 December 2020 and streamed online via StreamYard and YouTube.

sign of hegemonies, alliances, and rivalries in international relations as well as the development of broad and diffuse coalitions created around global political agendas focused on the relationship of human society with nature and the struggle against various forms of structural racism in different countries.

Communication technologies, e.g., mobile phones, digital media, and artificial intelligence play a key role in both dimensions of this process. On the one hand, they enable and empower the

processed by pre-programmed algorithms that tend to structure people and their behaviour according to the dominant social hierarchies.

The attempts by governments to reduce or control the coronavirus have had a different impact in various domains of life: closing internal and external borders, quarantine, lockdown, curfews, social isolation, mandatory use of face masks in public spaces, mandatory testing, measuring social distance by means of GPS and cell phone monitoring, closing shopping centres, schools, and religious gatherings (the main source of physical interaction in many parts of the world). One way or another, such measures, whether in isolation or in endless combinations, created new realities that have been experienced in an unequal manner according to class or ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, level of education, age, urban/rural condition and so forth.

The pandemic situation unfolded in a global context already characterised by a significant range of ongoing transformations, both in terms of the redesigning of forms of electoral political legitimacy within states, combined with the redefinition of hegemonies, alliances, and rivalries in international relations, and in terms of the formation of broad and diffuse coalitions around global political agendas, concentrated especially on the relationship between human society and the environment, and on fighting diverse structural manifestations of racism around the world. Given this complex panorama, it is important to ask to what extent the current pandemic crisis represents an opportunity for paradigm growth and change, or whether, conversely, it constitutes the prelude to an entrenchment of discriminatory practices and a steady weakening of the most

vulnerable at the global and local level, with a special emphasis on Africa.

21 years of experience: Factory of Ideas

On this topic, and inspired by the over twenty years of experience of the advanced doctoral school in Ethnic and African Studies Factory of Ideas, an intensive school was set up, jointly organised by the Factory of Ideas team in Brazil, based at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), the University of Campinas, Sao Paulo (UNICAMP) and the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA), and the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. The planetary scale of the course contributes to make it a challenging and innovative activity, also in the field of digital humanities, because it experiments with technology by developing a prototype of a platform for virtual international, interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional courses at a graduate level.

The XXI edition of the Factory of Ideas was dedicated to the theme “Pandemics and Utopias” and consists of two parts. The first section was held entirely online in November and December 2020, as a cycle of eight live conferences followed by question and answer sessions. The live series was organised on the platform StreamYard and broadcast to the public on the channel *Fábrica de Ideias* on the YouTube platform. Those who wanted to could register and, after attending the whole series, receive a certificate. The aim of the 2020 session was to reflect on the impacts of the pandemic from the point of view of the social reconfigurations imposed by social isolation, as well as the effective participation of the State in the management of this global crisis and the fabrication of new political agendas in transcontinental contexts. The second part was scheduled for the period 6 May through 17 June 2021, again online as a series of eight live conferences plus a mini-course in three sessions on the history of pandemics in Africa. The first part was held exclusively in Portuguese, while the second part will be in both English and Portuguese. The participants of both sessions are PhD students and, as an exception, Master students who demonstrate a strong correlation between their research and the theme of the course.

The first set of eight live conference sessions covered a range of subfields. In

the first one, the new virtual format of the Factory of Ideas was presented by Jamile Borges (UFBA), Antonio Evaldo de Barros (UFMA), and Livio Sansone (UFBA). This was done by discussing the challenge that a digital intensive course represents for the now already traditionally face-to-face and pretty intensive Factory of Ideas community. After a succinct review of the 21-years of Factory of Ideas experiences, both shortcomings and blockades were highlighted; however, the new opportunities offered by distance learning and digital seminars were also paid attention to. The future, in this respect, might be less bleak than social scientists often consider.

The second live session, given by Omar Ribeiro Thomaz (UNICAMP), dealt with the denial of the pandemics by the new forms of reactionary populism that we call *bolsonarismo* – a very hot issue given the tragic Brazilian situation. In the third session, historian Valdemir Zamparoni (UFBA) showed that there are both ruptures and continuities in the way African countries have historically faced pandemics, often with few means, but still quite efficiently. Fábio Baqueiro Figueiredo (University for International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB) and presently visiting scholar at the University of Bayreuth), in the fourth session, talked about hygienist policies in colonial and post-colonial Angola. He showed that there had been more continuities between these two stages of Angolan history than most laypeople would expect. In the following conference, Patrícia Godinho Gomes (UFBA) gave a panoramic view of the tense relationship between (illegal) immigration to Europe, the corona pandemics and the production of discourse on illness and contagion. The sixth session, given by Jamile Borges (UFBA), was dedicated to the future of the digital world, and the relationship between racism, Blackness, and the new ‘datacracy’ that is being constructed. Finally, in the last meeting, Jesiel Ferreira de Oliveira Filho (UFBA) did a reading of the new language forms produced within and on account of the pandemics by right-wing populists, often ‘negationists’, denying the relevance and pain caused by the COVID-19 pandemics, and also, to a lesser extent and in a different fashion, by their left-wing opponents.

Online format was a great success

On average, over 100 people followed the conference online and many more watched the recording wholly available on YouTube. Each conference was presented and mediated by Igor Torres, a graduate student; after each session, there was time for questions and answers, which was always quite lively. The complete recording of the conference series, including the question and answer part, was transcribed. An edited version of this transcription, to which have been added plenty of images and part of the recording, will be published in e-book format during the second part of our conference series to run from 6 May to 17 June 2021. This will be the first book of the new book series of Posafro/CEAO, *Afrofuturas*, specialising in Ethnic and African Studies.

In closing, the format of the first conference series of the advanced course on pandemics and utopias, with its simple technology and open access policy through the use of YouTube, has proven successful and a good step in the development of a prototype for an advanced and intensive virtual course in Ethnic and African Studies. The second part of the course, starting on 6 May 2021, will be the next test case for the *Fábrica de Ideias*.

The Coordinating team of the Fábrica de Ideias is formed by:

Livio Sansone (UFBA)
Jamile Borges (UFBA)
Omar Ribeiro Thomaz (UNICAMP)
Claudio Furtado
 (UNICV, Cape Verde)
Antonio Evaldo Almeida Barros
 (UFMA)
Fábio Baqueiro Figueiredo
 (UNILAB)
Felipe Fernandes (UFBA)
Patrícia Godinho Gomes (UFBA).

The conferences are available on YouTube:



Pandemics have marked in history key moments of change in the structure of power and politics, either by restructuring the social, economic, and cultural foundations of society or by the development and spreading of new and more encompassing techniques of mass control that usually end up being accepted as a necessary means to control contagion. The pandemic situation sparked off by the coronavirus in the first months of 2020 takes place in a global context already characterised by transformations that concern the process of legitimising electoral politics. The de-

circulation of information, images, and ideas with mobilising and emancipatory potential to an extent never seen before. Communication technologies create different opportunities and empower a new range of agents who produce knowledge and information from new locations and from social statuses that had previously often been silenced. On the other hand, these technologies make possible the immediate capturing of population data, thus far segmented and dispersed, on people’s movements, social and digital interaction, opinions, taste, aspirations, and fears, which are

2020 – A Year of Change for the TGCL

Thoko Kaime at his inaugural visit as project leader of the TGCL at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. (Photo: ALS)

Text PHILIPP BOGENSPERGER

In 2020, the Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL) proudly celebrated its twelfth anniversary. As the two phases of full funding by DAAD ended in 2018, and the third and final phase of partial funding will expire in 2023, the preparation for financial sustainability was one of the key focus points of the TGCL in 2020. For this reason, and also due to external circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 represented not only a year of change and rethinking for the TGCL, but also a year of new opportunities.

At the beginning of 2020, the TGCL bade farewell with deepest gratitude to Ulrike Wanitzek after a decade of successful leadership. Wanitzek retired from her posts as professor at the University of Bayreuth and project leader of the TGCL, and handed over her role in the project to Thoko Kaime, who was appointed Professor at the Chair of African Legal Studies at the University of Bayreuth. Wanitzek founded the TGCL, which earned her the name ‘Mother of the TGCL’, and during her years with the TGCL, she has been much more than just a professor or a project leader. The whole TGCL wishes her God’s blessings, good health, and a peaceful and joyful retirement. From 6 to 9 January 2020, Thoko Kaime, who is originally from Malawi, made his first official visit to the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania in his new position as project leader.

Pandemic Challenges

From March 2020, the TGCL was – just as all other areas of the world were – widely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the second semester of the 2019/2020 academic year had to be postponed, which also affected the conduct of field research for the TGCL students. Due to lockdowns administered in the six EAC countries in which the students carried out their research, some respondents as well as some of the resource areas targeted for interviews and research became physically inaccessible. Another challenge was the restriction of the free movement of persons, whereby some students faced challenges returning to Dar es Salaam from their home countries. Despite such struggles, students found their way back to the university to proceed with their studies. The lecturers were understanding of these challenges and did their best to ensure that no one was left behind in terms of classroom progress and performance of coursework. In addition, the University of Dar es Salaam fully ensured adherence to COVID-19 safety guidelines, and precautionary measures were taken during the study program in the second semester. The 2019/20 academic year has been one of a kind but has been successful despite the hurdles which are sometimes bound to happen.

TGCL as member of DIGI-FACE

More often than not, such challenges bear even greater opportunities: In 2020, the TGCL proudly became a member of the Digital Initiative for African Centres

of Excellence (DIGI-FACE) Project. DIGI-FACE is a three-year DAAD funded project with the possibility of a two-year renewal period after 2022. The project aspires to support the digital needs and enhance the digital capacities of all members and alumni of DAAD African Centres of Excellence and their networks via the development of e-learning modules and digital tools.

In retrospect, the year of 2020 deeply strengthened the cooperation and communication between the TGCL, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the University of Bayreuth. Due to the collaborative efforts of all institutions, the TGCL students as well as the TGCL alumni had the opportunity to thrive. Gilbert Hagabimana, one of the TGCL alumni pursuing their doctoral studies at the University of Bayreuth, successfully submitted his PhD in 2020. His thesis was titled *A Legal Analysis of the Relationship between State Sovereignty and Regional Integration: A Comparative Study between the European Union and the East African Community*. Veronica Buchumi and Cecilia Ngaiza, two other TGCL alumnae, also successfully carried out their research in 2020 and are expected to finish theirs soon.

Thanks to the cohesion of the TGCL staff, the lecturers, as well as the students, and their ability to quickly adapt to the given circumstances, the TGCL has managed to overcome the challenges of 2020 and confidently looks forward to the future and its independence beyond the year of 2023. 🌍

The International Fellowship Scheme during the Pandemic

Text ROBERT DEBUSMANN

The Fellowship scheme of the Cluster of Excellence successfully adjusted to the requirements that arose during the pandemic. In spite of these challenges twelve new Fellows were still able to take up their Fellowship with UBT in 2020 and – in addition to the Fellows that had already arrived in 2019 – contributed substantially to the Cluster’s underlying agenda.

Within the framework of the International Fellowship scheme, international scholars of African Studies are invited to the Bayreuth Academy in order to contribute with their projects to the theoretical and thematic agenda of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence. During their stay, the Fellows are integrated into the Cluster’s research units and make their own contributions, in particular by offering a Fellow lecture, open to the public.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Fellowship programme. The summer semester of 2020 was marked by the first lockdown: international travel was suspended and

face-to-face meetings were no longer allowed to take place at the university. Most Fellows who had planned to come to Bayreuth in the summer semester 2020 accepted the Cluster’s offer to postpone their stay to a later date. Four Fellows, however, did not postpone – they participated in online events from their home offices and worked virtually with the other Cluster members making them the first to successfully practice online Fellowships within the Cluster.

For the academic year 2020/21, 24 new International Fellows have been accepted and invited. With the postponed Fellowships of the previous year, a total of 38 Fellows have joined the Cluster, almost half of them during the winter semester 2020/21. The Cluster hoped to receive Fellows in Bayreuth again in the winter semester and meet for working and discussion groups, but were soon reminded otherwise: the ‘second wave’ forced the whole of UBT to once again renounce face-to-face meetings. Many Fellows again postponed their plans to stay, but the Cluster set a limit until the end of the summer semester. At the same time, Fellows were invited by the ACC directors to spend part of

the Fellowship with the ACCs. In the end, however, the Fellows had to switch almost entirely to online Fellowships from their home offices.

Some Fellows found a time slot in which they could travel to Bayreuth. They are looked after by the team of the Research Portfolio and, since 1 January 2021, by Hospitality Officer Gregor Gawor, who even guides the guests to their workplaces in the Bayreuth Academy building at Hugo-Rüdel-Straße 10 and does their shopping for them during their quarantine.

The pandemic does not make it easy for Fellows, academic hosts, and organisers. The alternation of restriction and relaxation in Germany and in the Fellows’ countries of origin, the uncertainty regarding international travel, and the health risks make it difficult to plan responsibly and with foresight. Under these circumstances, the Fellowship scheme happily continues to run with virtual meetings and exchanges via screen. The International Fellows take up these offers with great commitment and their contributions enrich the Cluster more than ever. 🌍

Stephen Muthoka Mutie: 01.01.2020–01.03.2020

Stephen Muthoka Mutie, Ph.D. is a lecturer and a researcher based at Kenyatta University, Kenya, where he teaches gender studies and literary theory. His research areas are gender studies, feminist scholarship, and political representation, with an emphasis on how these areas intersect. His project, *Feminist Knowledge Production in Africa: The Contribution of Wangari Maathai* is based on an urgent need for a homegrown African feminist ethos that is able to accommodate and carry the weight of African perspectives, preserve African cultural norms, and protect the women on the continent. To be able to create an African homegrown feminist exegesis, this study looks into the life story and intellectual interlocutions of Wangari Maathai, who was a Kenyan university professor, an environmentalist, and a politician and whose life story and intellectual life critique African feminism as hierarchical and defensive.



Joseph C. A. Agbakoba: 06.01.2020–07.03.2020

Joseph C. A. Agbakoba is a professor of philosophy at the University of Nigeria. His current research interest is in the field of development philosophy and ethics in relation to Africa and intercultural philosophy. His Fellowship project focuses on showing that our common notion of justice could be broadened by making a distinction between positive justice and negative justice. Positive justice is justice as complementation of parties, which builds the capabilities of parties rather than breaks them down. Positive justice seeks complementation (including restoration and transformation) by exploring a system of floating compensations in which over time parties are complemented and their development potentials are realised. This contrasts with negative justice, which is punitive and subtractive in character as seen in the retributive, preventive, and to some extent, reformatory senses of administrative/legal justice.

Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis: 01.01.2020–20.03.2020

Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, Ph.D. is associate professor of higher education studies at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His research focuses on internationalisation and regionalisation of higher education processes in Africa and South-South partnership models. In his project, *Reconceptualising Academic Freedom: Perspectives from Ethiopian Higher Education System*, he explores, reflects, and conceptualises the notion of academic freedom taking the Ethiopian higher education space as a case, and provides a comprehensive research approach that could accommodate more perspectives beyond the UNESCO indicators. Academic freedom, the freedom to pursue intellectual inquiry, is a core value and a key legitimating concept for academic communities and higher educational institutions. There has, however, been a constant debate not only on the philosophy and the practice of academic freedom but also on the very conceptualisation of the subject matter in academic research.

**Eleanor Tiplady Higgs: 01.10.2020–28.02.2021**

Eleanor Tiplady Higgs is an interdisciplinary feminist scholar in the humanities. She completed her PhD in Gender Studies at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 2018 and was postdoctoral research Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Cape Town, from 2018 to 2020. Her research interests lie in gender, race, and coloniality; ethics and narrative; Christianity; and the histories of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) movement in Anglophone African contexts (to date, Kenya and South Africa). She is interested in everyday or ordinary ethics in the context of Christian women's activism at the YWCA in South Africa, with whom she conducted field research in Soweto in 2019 and 2020. Her project addresses the textual and narrative organisation of institutional memory/history as 'story-data', and tracks how this narratively organised knowledge grounds the YWCA's ethical stance and conduct.

**Paul Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko: 01.02.2020–31.03.2020**

Paul Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko is a researcher in the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, (IADS) University of Lagos, Nigeria. In his studies in African traditional medicine, he puts a focus on how traditional medicine impacts healthcare. His ideas on uncommon methods of diagnosis shed light on what the orthodox medicine needs to investigate and take advantage of. His current research interest includes bioethical issues in African traditional medicine. Akin-Otiko thinks it is important to distinguish religion from folk remedies, in order to identify and appreciate the science in traditional medicine. His recent research has shown how traditional medicine can be analysed and evaluated using general scientific categories. The essence of his contribution to science is to draw traffic and attention to a highly relevant but disparaged area of study that is still largely not researched and requires efforts to excavate the value in African traditional medicine.

**Landry-Wilfrid Miampika Moundele: 06.10.2020–06.01.2021**

Landry-Wilfrid Miampika Moundele is associate professor of Francophone Studies at the University of Alcalá near Madrid, Spain. His main research interests lie in postcolonial African and Caribbean literatures and cultures in Spanish and French, postcolonial theories, migrations and cultures of the African diasporas, interconnections between arts and literatures, and contemporary African art. His project *Images and Representations of African Migrations in Contemporary Francophone Romance* is part of a long research effort on the theme of migration and its interrelations with Francophonie, transnationalism, integration, and living together in Europe. From comparative postcolonial and literary studies on the one hand, the research focuses on analysing the reflections on migrations produced in francophone thought (Africa).

**Matthew Sabbi: 01.01.2020–30.06.2020**

Matthew Sabbi holds a Dr. phil. in Development Sociology and has been a postdoctoral researcher at the Chair of Development Sociology, University of Bayreuth. His main research fields are the sociology of development policy, political sociology of Africa (decentralisation and local political reforms), and organisational sociology (particularly how actors behave and adapt to organisational reform). His research project for the Cluster of Excellence examines the everyday life of Ghanaian councillors with a focus on their relational networks. In former studies on decision influence in decentralised structures in the Global South, little attention is paid to specific networks and the relations of councillors that exact decision-making influence. In his project, Sabbi applies social network analysis together with detailed empirical data from Ghana to re-interpret the agency in everyday, mundane, and mutually-constituted strategies of councillors.

**Tabea Scharrer: 26.10.2020–25.01.2021**

Tabea Scharrer is research partner at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany. She is interested in social anthropological research about (forced) migration, socio-economic inequality, and religion, with a focus on Eastern Africa. During her time at the Cluster of Excellence, she worked on building a theoretical framework for a project dealing with social class in the context of forced migration. Her work explores the relationship between spatial and social mobility and therefore dissects the multiple relations in and through which phenomena emerge. In her research with Somali migrants, these multiple relations encompass transnational family networks, various regional migration regimes, as well as the flow of different sorts of capital and their potential conversion in and between the various localities migrants live in.

**Susanne Mohr: 01.03.2020–31.07.2020**

Susanne Mohr is associate professor of English Sociolinguistics at the Department of Language and Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim. Her main research interests are multilingualism and (cross-modal) language contact, as well as language and globalisation. Her project investigates the acquisition of English, a global lingua franca frequently used in tourist spaces, and Kiswahili, the official language of Tanzania and Zanzibar, among tourists and hosts on Zanzibar's Unguja island. The central aim of the project is to describe the different trajectories and modes of language learning, and to discuss them in light of recent theories of language learning in superdiversity framework. The analysis is based on ethnographic data from several fieldwork trips, including sociolinguistic interviews and observations at tourist locations, shops, schools, and NGOs, as well as Q-methodological data.

**Susanne Gehrman: 01.11.2020–28.02.2021**

Susanne Gehrman is a professor of African literatures and cultures at the institute of Asian and African studies, Humboldt University Berlin. Her research foci are on representations of violence, intermediality, autobiography, gender, and genre innovation in African literatures with a regional focus on West and Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Togo in particular. Her project, *Generic Innovations, Intermedial Aesthetics and the Circulation of African Literatures: Togo in a Comparative Perspective*, takes the rich Togolese literary/cultural production as a starting point for further comparative research and is based on research questions that unfold on the levels of writing, of the sociology of literature, and of comparison. The three levels are intertwined and will not be dealt with separately, but through an integral approach.

**Ulrike Bergermann: 01.04.2020–31.07.2020**

Ulrike Bergermann is professor of Media Studies at the Braunschweig University of Art in Germany, with main areas of research in gender and postcolonial studies and the history of knowledge. In her project she tells the chronicle of the kanga, a piece of printed cotton fabric, along the lines of appropriation and identity building. In the 19th century, Swahili women of the upper class in Zanzibar bought cotton cloth from Portuguese traders and made it into dresses that became popular fashion. They ordered their own designs to be printed, and became very inventive in using iconic motives as well as proverbs or sayings. After independence, kangas symbolised cultural autonomy. Bergermann scrutinises the expression 'cultural property' examining the UN or international trade organisations who have developed copyright laws for it. Postcolonial critics called these 'white laws' and advocate a 'postcolonial copyright' that includes practices which are not based on property but on sharing and commons.

**R. Benedito Ferrão: 07.11.2020–04.02.2021**

R. Benedito Ferrão is assistant professor of English and Asian and Pacific Islander American Studies at The College of William and Mary, Virginia, USA. His scholarly and teaching interests are in Afro-Asiatic connections between Portuguese and British post/colonialities, as well as diaspora and transnational fiction with a focus on race, gender, and sexuality. His current research interest focuses on literary works that use Goan diasporic lives, displaced between pluricontinental locales, to demonstrate the schism between these characters and the nations they find themselves in or expelled from. What this research suggests in its study of minority representation in literature is that it serves as a lens through which to recognise the fractures of such concepts as the nation and postcolonialism. As a fellow of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, he concentrated on the influence of the short history of German colonialism in East Africa, especially given its collusions and contests with British and Portuguese colonialisms.





The 2020 group of BIGSAS Junior Fellows included: Valerie Gruber, Laura Guadagnano, Perseverance Madhuku, Abdoulaye Ibrahim Bachir (1st row, f.l.t.r.); Catheline Nyabwengi, Sophie Lembcke, Usman Ahmad, Mary Mulenga Wincierz (2nd row, f.l.t.r.); Carsten Möller, Veronika Thalhammer, Hamissou Rhissa Achaffert (3rd row, f.l.t.r.).

(The depicted persons own the rights to their own image.)

change ideas and make use of synergies, is steadily growing. Thanks to 14 successful doctoral defences, the number of alumni grew to 156 from 34 different countries, out of which 24 countries are in Africa. Furthermore, BIGSAS alumni Abraham Brahima, Irina Turner, and Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis are congratulated on the publication of the book *Decolonisation of Higher Education in Africa: Perspectives from Hybrid Knowledge Production*, for which the panel session *Indigenous Knowledges and Decolonisation in Higher Education: Current Discourses, Pertinence, and Prospects* at the BIGSAS Alumni Conference 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was one initiating factor.

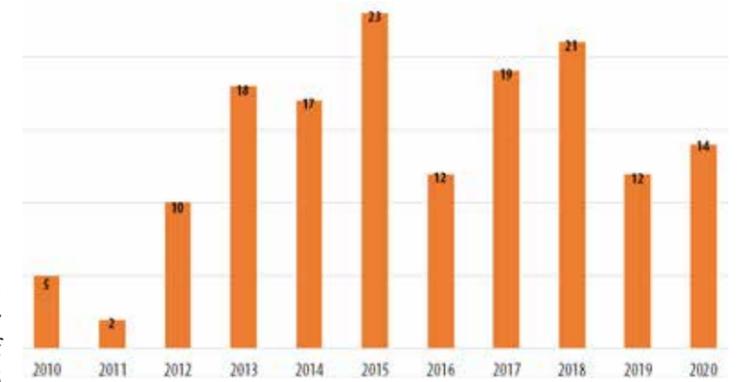
The pandemic did not hinder BIGSAS from further improving the framework conditions for successful doctoral completion. The focus of the work was on a revision of the Doctoral Regulations, effective from February 2021. The revised regulations take into consideration issues that were raised with the integration of BIGSAS into the Cluster of Excellence. Among other things, it allows for a cumulative doctorate by publishing a number of papers in peer-reviewed journals and by adjusting to the aptitude assessment process for applicants as well as to the doctoral examination procedure. Active participation in a BIGSAS Colloquium will be a requirement for admission to the doctoral examination. The colloquia are an essential pillar of the doctoral programme in BIGSAS. They are a unique platform for all Junior Fellows to present their research projects, engaging junior and senior researchers in an interdisciplinary dialogue of mutual benefit. For the first time in the BIGSAS history, two purely online colloquia were conducted in 2020.

Awards

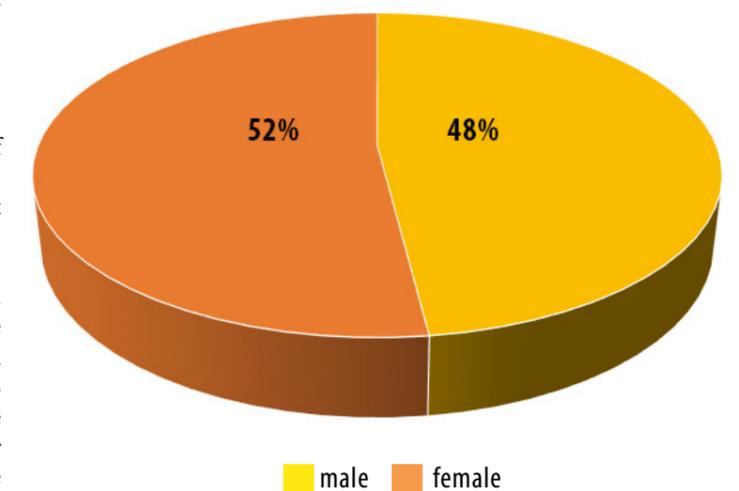
In 2020, BIGSAS scholars attracted attention beyond university boundaries through awards and publications. Hanza Diman received the *DAAD Preis* (DAAD Award), honouring exceptional academic performance. In addition, the BIGSAS alumni Gemechu Adimassu Abeshu and Sabrina Maurus were awarded the *Preis der Stadt Bayreuth* (City of Bayreuth Award) in recognition of their outstanding dissertations: Abeshu on emerging forms of political power in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, and Maurus on the dilemmas of schooling young people in southwest Ethiopia.

Moreover, ten alumni published their dissertations in 2020. Three published in the series *Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung* from LIT Verlag, three published online, and one each with Springer Verlag, Ledizioni, Nomos Verlag and L'Harmattan.

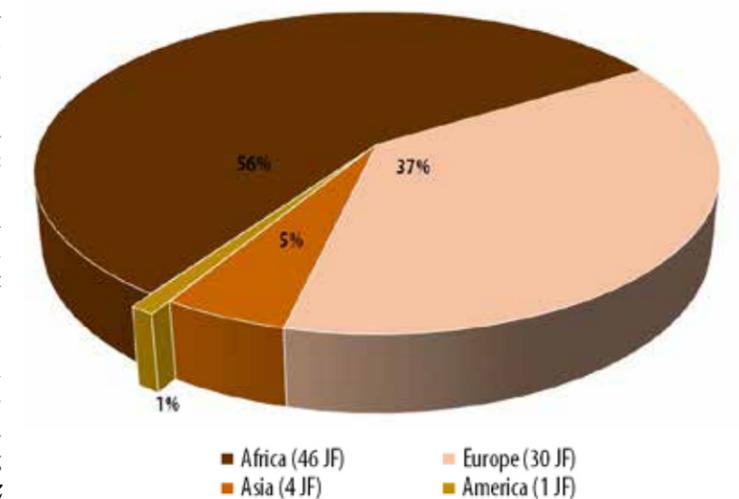
BIGSAS ALUMNI 2010 – 2020



GENDER RATIO JUNIOR FELLOWS



REGION OF ORIGIN JUNIOR FELLOWS



BIGSAS Status Quo 2020

Text JULIUS JUNGINGER

In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) can look back on a successful 2020.

After the organisational realignment making BIGSAS a part of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence in 2019, BIGSAS has been coping with a completely new challenge since March 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences during the year of 2020 forced BIGSAS to adjust. Despite the pandemic situation, BIGSAS was, with its structured and goal-oriented organisational framework, able to give advice in critical cases and find solutions. Nevertheless, 2020 has been a difficult

year for the doctoral candidates, their supervisors, and the administrative team.

16 doctoral candidates from eight countries

The number of new doctoral candidates, the Junior Fellows, joining BIGSAS has remained constant over the last two years. In 2020, BIGSAS welcomed 16 new Junior Fellows. The new doctoral candidates come from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. By the end of 2020, the total number of Junior Fellows amounted to 81 from 26 different countries. The vast majority of the Junior Fellows, 46, come from Africa, 30 from Europe, four from Asia, and one from America. The gender ratio displays a slight shift towards a feminine majority

of Junior Fellows: 52 percent of the Junior Fellows were women while 48 percent were men.

The high level of interest in the graduate school is also reflected in the large number of applications. In 2020, BIGSAS received 112 applications, most submitted by candidates interested in one of the DAAD Graduate School Scholarship Programme (GSSP) scholarships for female scholars based on the African continent. At the end of 2020, BIGSAS published another call for applications for two scholarships to be awarded in 2021 to female scholars from Africa.

BIGSAS alumni network

The BIGSAS alumni network, which provides a platform for the graduates to ex-





The examination committee for the defence of Alžběta Šváblová held 'in camera'. (Photo: Alžběta Šváblová)

Doctoral Studies in Times of COVID-19: Coping with Restrictions, Lockdowns, and Change of Plans

Text SOFIE REINL, DINA SODJADAN

While the COVID-19 pandemic is taking its toll everywhere, this article explores how the coronavirus has particularly changed the lives and research of the BIGSAS Junior Fellows.

Times of crisis like these are often cluttered with statistics and percentages framing the public discourse. It seems easy to forget the profound stories of struggle, challenge, and success. Stories of cancelled trips and changed plans; of conquering new online territories or giving up recovering corrupted recordings; and stories of being 'stuck' at home – lonely or conversely, unable to get to a quiet working environment. Even though we all experience these stories ourselves, telling them is not redundant. Let us transform our individual challenges into collective ones by sharing them. After all, many Junior Fellows are 'sitting in the same boat' – or in front of their computers: waiting for an email, downloading literature, and searching for the link to the video conference. The following article aims to highlight some voices of current and former BIGSAS

Junior Fellows who have had and often still must overcome one or the other kind of obstacle due to the pandemic.

Some doors closed ...

Many doctoral projects depend heavily upon on-site research in the field, relying on interviews, participant observation, and rummaging in local archives. Needless to say, most of this was made almost impossible in 2020. "I was supposed to start my fieldwork six months after I arrived in Bayreuth. But now I have been in Bayreuth over a year without being able to go to the field. It is a difficult situation," says Abdoulaye Ibrahim Bachir, who arrived at the University of Bayreuth in January 2020. He tried to use this time to his advantage to develop his project and focus more on the literature review. This allowed him to better frame his project and to restructure his research questions. Even though Bachir was able to conduct some interviews online, it was not enough for his thesis. "To progress in my work, I need materials from the field," he adds.

Diana Kisakye shares a similar experience. Forced by circumstance, she experimented with online interviewing. "Even

though I received some insights, it was riddled with frustrations and disruptions. I opted for alternative data sources to complement my project while I eagerly await travel," she explains. Additionally, Kisakye had to drop some initial ideas to cope with the uncertainty brought on by COVID-19.

Not only field trips but dozens of academic events were cancelled or at best postponed, having negative effects on academic networking and personal development. Cecilia Ngaiza was admitted to an international course and conference on Legal Pluralism in July 2020 in Brisbane, Australia. Ngaiza planned to present and subsequently publish a paper. Unfortunately, both events were unable to take place. "Up to now, I have not heard from the organisers on the revival of the planning processes regarding the events due to the unsettled conditions on the ground," she says with regret.

... while others opened up

Catheline Nyabwengi sees the impact of the lockdowns on her project as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it denied her access to national archives and public offices. On the other hand,

traversing the counties in Kenya where she conducts fieldwork would have been very costly on her side. "With the COVID-19 shutdowns, many respondents accepted the calls and Skype interviews," she says, showing that new doors for conducting research have opened up.

A similar point is stressed by Ngozi Edeagu: "I was able to access a trove of digital archival resources that have been invaluable to my ongoing research when I was unable to visit the archives last summer." However, these 'new' points of entry go hand in hand with strong networks and genuine collegial relationships. "As a researcher, it is important to keep engaging with a wider community of scholars, as you never know who might help you or who you can help in turn," Edeagu emphasises.

No exchange with peers

"What is certainly missing in these COVID-19 times is the mutual exchange among peers – our 'Leidensgenossen', or fellow sufferers, as Germans jokingly like to refer to each other in similar situations," says Frederik Wild. The biggest loss for him is the connection and collaboration between Junior Fellows and like-minded people. This exchange has inescapably decreased even if most meetings continue online. "This [exchange] is invaluable, not only concerning the academic component of our respective doctorates, but also regarding the personal connections and the network we all aim to build within and outside of academia," Wild adds. Only time will show what the pandemic will do to our social lives. Af-



Examiner Andreas Mehler took part via video conference. (Photo: Alžběta Šváblová)

ter all, we do not know when things will go back to 'normal' whatever that term might mean by then.

In camera – the new normal

Anything but normal was also the pro-

cess of defending a thesis in times of COVID-19. Alžběta Šváblová was the first Junior Fellow to defend her PhD project *in camera*. "The preparation for the disputation was a bit complicated due to my family situation. Schools were closed, so we had to home-school our daughter. This, together with my husband working in a system-relevant job, meant that I had very limited time for my work," Šváblová says. But luckily on that day everything went well, and she successfully defended her thesis. "Although I imagined it in a different way, I will always remember my defence as a part of this extraordinary time," Šváblová adds.



John Yajalin was able to continue his field research while it was not possible for him to return to Germany in mid-2020. (Photo: John Yajalin)

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Joh Sarre also had to defend *in camera* and was hit hard by this news at first. Of course, everything also went well and Sarre succeeded. One of the best moments was a 'digital party' other Junior Fellows had organised for Sarre afterwards. "Everybody could be there: My

evening," Sarre enthuses. Because people who live in our own city are equally as accessible as our friends all over the world, the latter almost seem physically closer than they are. Who would have thought that a global lockdown can lead to this change of perspective?

Without a doubt the pandemic with all its stress, restrictions, and uncertainties has negatively impacted all of academia, and especially doctoral candidates who are highly dependent on mobility and networks to complete their thesis. Most of the Junior Fellows, however, did not stop striving for excellence, finding creative solutions, new ways, and positivity in times like ours. Furthermore, almost all are confident and hopeful that the pandemic will come to an end and 'business as usual' will be able to continue in the future. The BIGSAS team certainly shares this optimism and wishes every Junior Fellow all the best in their projects! 🐾



Photo: EIMAS

An EIMASter's Journey

Part One: Migration and Learning

Text EDIDIIONG IBANGA

EIMAS student Edidiong Ibanga shares with NAB her thoughts and personal experiences during her first semester at the University of Porto in Portugal.

It was a warm afternoon in March 2020, and at the time, COVID was only the 'stuff' you watched in movies. I was in the hair salon reinforcing my stance on natural hair by soliciting beauty treatments for my lovely, kinky black hair. When the mail notification rang out loud, it was with wariness that I looked at my phone, expecting that it would be another random advertisement of unneeded products by an unyielding marketer, or even worse, a tweet notification. Disappointment never felt so good because when I looked at my phone, what I saw turned out to be an opportunity that impacted me and continues to do so in many ways. My application for a scholarship to study for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in



EIMAS student Edidiong Ibanga
(Photo: EIMAS)

African Studies was considered favorably and I was being invited for an interview. Needless to say, I was filled with a cocktail of emotions, like every person who prays for rain yet wonders how to handle the soaking wetness that comes with it. Those feelings explain most of my experiences to date.

Growing up in Nigeria and undertaking undergraduate studies in both Nigeria and Ghana, I had developed a passion for the study of the continent. In fact, a few topical considerations in African Studies were mandated for my undergraduate studies. It was from these classes that I began to get the sense that Africa had been both underrepresented and misrepresented, and that if change was to occur, I needed to play an active part in it. Ignorance was no longer bliss, and knowledge would be the first thing to acquire. So, when I got into the EIMAS program, I trusted that it was a step in the right direction.

When I left my home country to study in

Portugal, Germany, and France, the irony of learning about my continent from another continent was not lost on me. Beyond this, however, I was intrigued by the opportunities that my travel and study would bring. The chance to interact with students and facilitators from different academic and cultural backgrounds, and the hopes for an expanded view on many issues were foremost on my mind. Fun was somewhere at the bottom of the list (if you believe that). With gusto then, I set off and arrived in my first country of mobility, Portugal, beginning my journey towards another 'phasal' growth.

My first challenge was linguistic. I had been socialised to believe that English was a language spoken and understood everywhere. As I continued through the course of formal and informal education, and interacted with the world through new and traditional media, I realised it was not so. The degree to that truth, however, was lost on me till I arrived at the airport and needed to communicate. Needless to say, my attempt to converse nearly left me lost, and in tears. My interaction with my colleagues since then, as well as the inner promptings from my experiences so far, have allowed me to demystify the English language. This demystification opened me up to a new level of appreciation of linguistic diversity, devoid of the trappings of inaccurate narratives of an inflated superiority of one language over the other.

My EIMAS experience so far is replete with tales of growth that are often not formal but tend to occur mostly in the seemingly mundane expressions of life. The main catalyst for this growth so far has been the unification of diversity, a characteristic feature of the EIMAS program. Together, we have shared meals, dances, and songs from our different cultures. We have shared thoughts, ideas, orientations, beliefs, and experiences. Neither of these things have been about determining which culture is better. It has rather been an impactful learning experience that has been beneficial in more ways than one. Our formal learning experiences so far have not been about swooping in to save a continent that is often erroneously portrayed as helpless and dying, but to understand its history, systems, and processes in order to frame a pathway for better global relations, among other things. Since I began



Photo: EIMAS

my EIMAS journey, every act or conversation has been an experience. I have come to learn that diversity exposes the limitations of our own views, and offers us the opportunity to see the world from multiple perspectives.

Diversity necessitates dialogue, which is a principle often overlooked. Our academic activities, for instance, often involve aspects of group work. This being so, the need to enter into dialogue by communicating through differing views, temperaments, perspectives, and opinions, often presents itself. The value of mutual respect becomes highlighted in the knowledge that everyone's perspective and views are valid. It proves that with a little more understanding and proper communication, a lot more can be achieved. How important this is in the world we find ourselves. Replete with strife and conflict of different sorts, this approach to learning not only allows for reorientation and personal adjustments, but also provides a peephole into the possibilities that abound should our shared humanity be factored into our diversity. The EIMAS program is my chance at more than just academic earnings.



Photo: EIMAS

In the midst of the desire to be politically correct in today's climate, we have lost our common humanity. The basic humanity we share has been overridden by the desire to outdo or altogether silence the other. Conflicts arise where there is little or no communication. Development campaigns are initiated where there is little understanding of what the needs of a community are, which leads you to question the true intentions: Are they for publicity and self-aggrandisement, or to create true and lasting change? To reinforce the perceived notions of superiority or to create a mutually beneficial partnership? While these may seem idealistic to most, the truth remains that the values learnt from experiences such as what the EIMAS offers, are not lost. An Ibibio proverb states that "Etoño ke idap ekpeb mkpa," to wit, "To learn to die, we start by sleeping." Perhaps these are the very beginning steps that we need to learn to redirect the course of political, economic, and social affairs in the societies we find ourselves.

Or perhaps it is in the recognition of the truth that I am one with the Slovakian photographer who expresses her views without fear or favor, the 'conceptual' Ethiopian whose love for his country can be heard in every sentence, the sunny and cheerful Italian, the interrogative Malagasy, the funny and expressive Nigerian, the entrepreneurial Greek, the adventurous Filipino, the soft-spoken Sotho, the caring and thoughtful Malawian, the intense but intelligent Kenyan, the interesting and soulful Brazilian, and the articulate Ghanaian, that I can begin to harness the power of diversity and understand what true partnership and collaboration requires – mutual understanding and respect.

This is the kind of knowledge that the EIMAS reinforces, and that knowledge in itself is Power!

The EIMAS students are a close-knit group frequently embarking on joint activities.

EIMASters' Retrospections on Their First Semester at the University of Porto

NAB asked the EIMAS students about their impressions on the first station of the four-part programme.



Abiud Bosire (Kenya)

I am beyond thrilled to have received the Erasmus Mundus scholarship for my Master in Africa studies. The EIMAS programme has made me realise that there is enormous potential in people that they themselves do not know. It goes without saying that my experiences and exchange of ideas with my lecturers and colleagues has enriched my perspectives. Living in Porto, Portugal and currently in Bayreuth, Germany is itself a cultural immersion second to none.

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Razanoelison Ny Aina (Madagascar)

In Porto, I not only discovered an experience of a lifetime and met new people, unique and amazing people in EIMAS, but I also discovered myself. This person heard and learnt from one of the EIMAS colleagues that the only way to start is to start, so one day, he just decided to rent a bike and cycle from Porto to the north of Portugal.



Timothy Earl Mateo Castillon (Philippines)

From Sino-African studies to death and mourning culture of Yorubas in Nigeria, EIMAS provides me an avenue to explore and debate a variety of African social issues. The diversity of my fellow EIMASters' geographical and disciplinary backgrounds creates a stimulating environment.

Keneuoe Leballo (Lesotho)

My experience in Porto for the first semester was generally very good. I was mostly excited to learn a new culture and language. I was also excited to get new learning perspectives. My expectations were highly met. The first semester was filled with a vibrant teaching staff that were not only there to teach but were also eager to engage and open up a great platform to learn about their students' experiences and innovative ideas. Although there were a number of regulations put in place due to the current situation, we were still able to fully appreciate the beauty of Porto and immerse ourselves into the environment.



Diana Takacsova (Slovakia)

Thought-provoking discussions, a university where I have felt at home since day one, a special winter by the ocean... There are just too many details that made the first semester in Porto special.



Lucas Novais (Brazil)

The first semester at Porto was truly special. The people are one of the most educated that I've met and to experience it first-hand was a delight. It was also quite intriguing and interesting to see how some of the issues that tie Portugal, Brazil, and the African continent were handled and presented. But most of all, the best part was to meet diverse professors and content that much enriched my knowledge. Muito obrigado!



Lawrence Edward Katunga (Malawi)

I liked the classroom interactions through which everyone became conscious in using the word 'Africa' to avoid making generalisations in studying about Africa.



Konstantinos Loukianos Maragkos (Greece)

I had the chance to learn more about the Lusophone countries!

Silvia Diazzi (Italy)

For me EIMAS is a learning experience at 360 degrees and the Porto semester has paved the way for improvement and continuous discovery. The wonderful inputs from the faculty and my colleagues are stimulating the drive to continue exploring and questioning everything. I am looking forward to the next adventures that EIMAS will bring.



Odunola Alexander Oladeji (Nigeria)

In the class of beauty, the ancient city of Porto has no match, and down the hilly masterpiece is a breath-taking view of the Atlantic Ocean. Meanwhile, seeing historic monuments dotting the alleys and the strategic corners of the street: 'fascinating' will be an understatement. Anyways, my experiences will not be complete without EIMASers. Coming from different corners of the world, nothing about us was the same- nationality, culture, at best, not even discipline. Yet, the bond of seven months and counting is a testament that, irrespective of who we are, where we come from, or what we believe, humanity is a global unit.



Muluneh Aragaw (Ethiopia)

In the hands of thoughtful and good-hearted professors, amiable colleagues, and casting my worries on a solutionist coordinator, the first semester of EIMAS in Porto was a momentous journey!



Yaw Acheampong (Ghana)

It's not every day that one gets a fine blend of colourful and brilliant colleagues, each a doyen in their own fields; to live in three different cities while studying the same program; to meet outstanding professors, a program coordinator in a class of her own, and the challenge of polyglotism. This EIMAS programme is clean sensational!



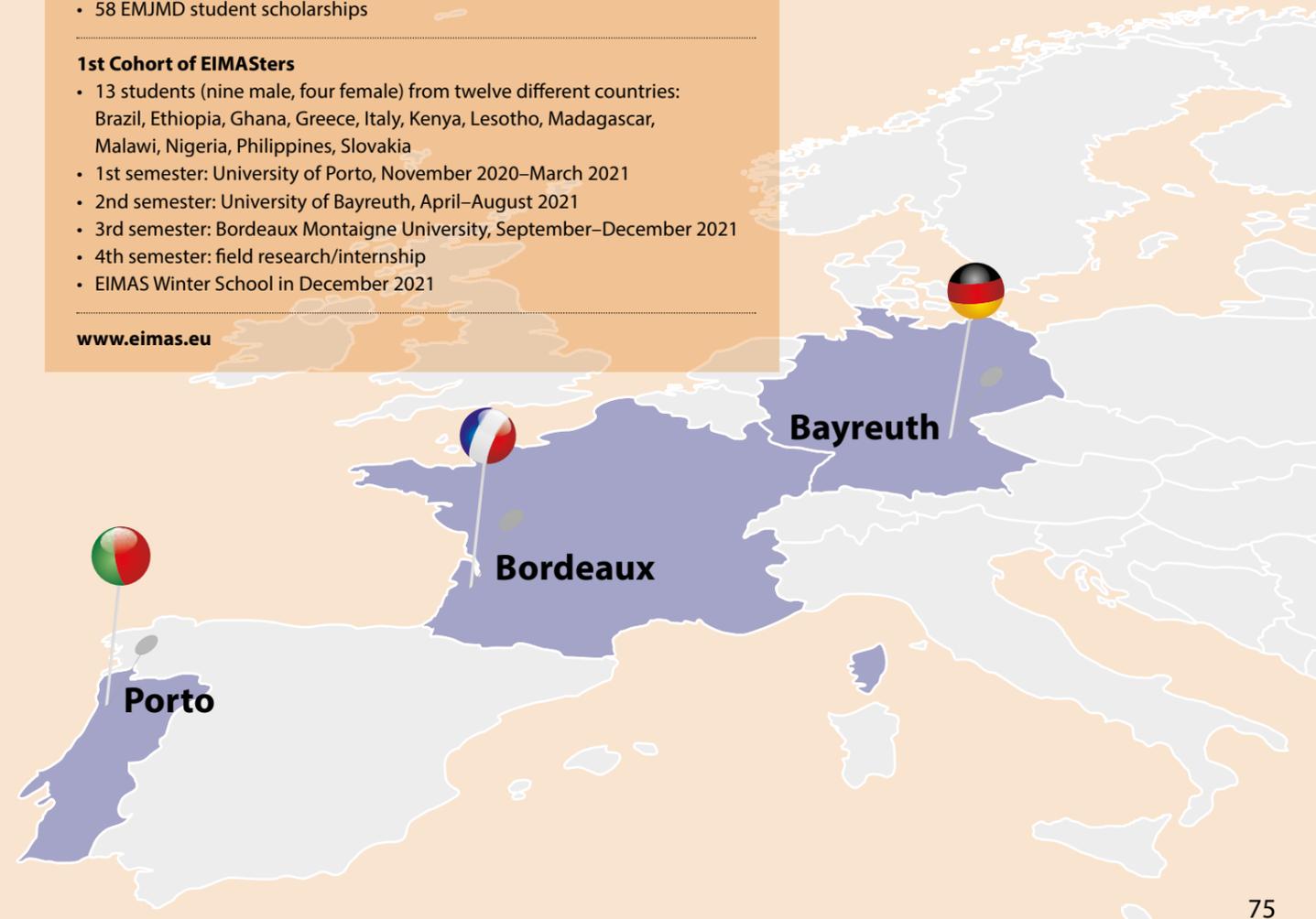
General Information on EIMAS

- EIMAS = European Interdisciplinary Master African Studies
- Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD)
- Partner universities: University of Porto, Portugal; Bordeaux Montaigne University, France; and University of Bayreuth, Germany
- Funded by the European Union with 2.936 million Euro (2020–2025, four cohorts of students)
- 58 EMJMD student scholarships

1st Cohort of EIMASers

- 13 students (nine male, four female) from twelve different countries: Brazil, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Philippines, Slovakia
- 1st semester: University of Porto, November 2020–March 2021
- 2nd semester: University of Bayreuth, April–August 2021
- 3rd semester: Bordeaux Montaigne University, September–December 2021
- 4th semester: field research/internship
- EIMAS Winter School in December 2021

www.eimas.eu



Photos: Diana Takacsova

African Stories – an Event Series by the Model African Union

Text and photo CHENGETAI CHOTO

The Association Model African Union Bayreuth e.V. (MAU) had to cancel its annual conference due to the pandemic. However, African Stories – a new online workshop series – was established instead.

After the unprecedented events of a year that was challenging for all, the MAU Association was forced to think outside the box. Renowned for its annual BAY-MAU Conference, members of MAU set out to plan a series of events under the theme of 'African Stories'. The aim of this series was to create an event that would be as engaging, informative, and entertaining as the conference that the association has become synonymous with. With everything going digital, MAU was definitely going into uncharted waters. However, with a determined and dedicated team and with the support of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, MAU was sure to take on the challenge.

African Stories – three online workshops

The digital age has certainly provided a platform for many more people to share their stories and the African continent is no exception. However, the information we consume can often be distorted and African stories have often unfortunately fallen victim to this phenomenon. MAU believes that *African stories* are best told by their protagonists, Africans. The African Stories event series was a step in the right direction. It was an opportunity to not only provide a platform, but to tell authentic stories

Zoey the Storyteller (left) and Chengetai Choto

and to therefore initiate productive discourse.

The first event was a workshop held by El-Shaddai Deva, who is no stranger to MAU. The workshop was titled *Eine chaotische Sprache, um eine chaotische Geschichte zu erzählen* (A chaotic language to tell a chaotic story). Deva used his extensive experience to present his ideas and start an engaging dialogue with the participants. The event was definitely the perfect kick-off to the series, establishing a lot of the themes that would come up again in the events to follow.

The following event was a workshop titled *African stories then and now and their authenticity* by the Ugandan artist Zoey Patricia Kayendeke, more commonly referred to as Zoey the Storyteller. Zoey is a woman of many talents who refuses to be put in a box. She is a Ugandan folklorist and poet who uses voice, movement, music, and theatre to not only tell stories but to paint pictures through words. As a young artist, her style of storytelling is reminiscent of the times when Africans would gather around a fire and share stories about brave men and women, a practice that is still prevalent in some parts of the continent but less so now. Her presentation gave the audience a glimpse of her diverse talents. The event began with a talk and a discussion about the richness of African stories. The participants also discussed the importance of authentic African stories within the continent and beyond its borders. They also spoke about the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the diversity of these

stories. The lively discussion was followed by a surprise music performance complete with ululations by Zoey.

Ndoni Mccunu, the founder and CEO of the non-profit organisation Black Women in Science (BWIS), concluded the event series with a workshop under the name *Enhancing the African Narrative in Academia and Research*. The South African scholar provided the audience with a perspective that is so rarely seen in the world of science. African stories go beyond the arts; they touch on every aspect of life, including science. The discussion that followed Mccunu's presentation stressed the importance of encouraging young women to be a part of a field that has somewhat alienated them. A recurring idea was the importance of representation, which happens to be the focal point of Mccunu's organisation.

New possibilities

2020 might have thrown MAU a curveball but it also opened up many possibilities. It was exciting to have hosts and audiences from all over the world, something that is usually only possible at the annual conference. MAU experimented with a new concept which turned out to be a great success. What started as a replacement for the cancelled 2020 BAYMAU conference ended up being a standalone series of events with its own unique feel. It also amplified the MAU team's ability to navigate the digital space, a skill that will most definitely come in handy in the 2021 BAYMAU Conference under the theme *Made In Africa – Innovations, Concepts, and Solutions for the Challenges of Our Time*. 🌍

Towards Becoming: How the SKAnning Workshop Constituted the Africa Off-Earth Network

Text IRINA TURNER, HANNA NIEBER

The workshop SKAnning Space from Africa: Seeing and Becoming that took place in Bayreuth from 10–14 February 2020, marked a milestone in the becoming of an interdisciplinary network called AOEN. The respective cluster Postdoc Working Group laid the foundation for this collaborative project.

An interdisciplinary workshop took place in Bayreuth in February 2020. It was the culmination of the multilateral Postdoc Cluster Working Group, *SKAnning Space from Africa: Seeing and Becoming*, focusing



Davide Chinigò during his presentation "Becoming with the Square Kilometre Array"

on the largest radio telescope on earth, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA). The SKA enables not only cutting-edge science but also new 'becomings' of things and people. Existing radio dishes are converted into astronomical instruments and a new generation of experts and scientists such as astrophysicists, bioinformaticians, and geographic information systems specialists are currently being trained and celebrated as Africa's bright future. In the workshop, the participants analysed and discussed processes and conditions for these 'becomings', entangled with temporalities and spatialities of socio-technicality. Seeking different disciplinary perspectives on 'becomings', partakers came from the fields of astronomy, social science studies, anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy.

Coming

Despite delayed arrivals from cancelled flights and trains due to the storm Sabine, eventually all participants arrived safely. The workshop started with an excursion into the nearby Fichtelgebirge mountains guided by the local expert and media ce-

lebrity, University of Bayreuth colleague Adrian Rossner. In the history of the Fichtelgebirge, the most interesting part, with respect to the workshop theme, was the lingering absence and inaccessibility of knowledge about the former military use of the radio tower on Schneeberg mountain. Workshop participants were unable to visit the tower because the regulations for the surrounding nature reserve prohibit using the roads, the storm prevented passage through the mountain forest, and, above all, entry into the compound of the tower is highly restricted due to the sensitive instruments and information stored on site. The significant absences and questions of access were experiential reminders of similar dynamics within the SKA mega science project.

Becoming

Each workshop day opened with a public lecture. Presenters were James Chibueze, Professor of Astronomy at North-West University South Africa and SKA specialist; Davide Chinigò, postdoctoral social science researcher from Stellenbosch University in South Africa and co-editor of *Karoo futures: Astronomy in Place and Space*; and Charles Ratsifaritana, Professor of Astronomy in Madagascar. The days continued with closed workshop ses-

sions where issues like decoloniality, visibility, translation, pedagogy, aesthetics, archiving, and public responsiveness of astronomy were discussed. As an output, participants created three teaching vid-

eos explaining three common key concepts of astronomy and social sciences, viz. black box, translation, and assemblage. More detailed accounts can be found in Samyukta Manikumar's reflections on the workshop published on the africa-news.space webpage.

The workshop made abundantly clear that there is a lot more serious collaborative research to explore through the SKA than can be discussed in three days. The meeting helped in carving out common lines of interest and drafting ideas for future collaboration in strategic and systematic ways.

Beyond Becoming: Africa Off-Earth Network

Emerging from an inspiring group spirit and the tangible benefits of a transdisciplinary exchange, the network that manifested in Bayreuth subsequently started to work in several sub-groups to collaborate on publications and conference presentations. With the support of the Cluster, the Working Group eventually established the Africa Off-Earth Network and accompanying website to reflect its networking activities and provide a virtual gathering place for new projects around astronomy in Africa. To find out where the group is going with this, watch this space: www.africa-off-earth.net. 🌍



James Merron remedying James Chibueze who explains waves' baselines



From top left to right bottom: Samyukta Manikumar, Noluvuyo Matiwane, Susann Ludwig, James Chibueze, Hanna Nieber, Tadeji Pirc, Siri Lamoureux, Irina Turner, Basil Bucher, Davide Chinigò, James Merron



Shakespeare and Africa: Exploring Literary Entanglements Across Space and Time

Audience members, student actors*actresses
Joyce Abia Sango, Annetta Kopas and Patrick
Onuh in a scene from *Wesoo Hamlet!* (Photo:
Serena Talento)

Text IFEOLUWA ABOLUWADE

One of the Cluster's Postdoc Working Groups examined the dialogical and dialectical intersections generated by the multifaceted polylogue between Shakespearean works and their African (Diasporic) appropriations.

At the core of the research in the Postdoc Working Group *Shakespearean Pasts, African Futurities: Entanglements of Memory, Temporalities, and Knowledge(s)* during winter semester 2019/2020 is the concept of 'literary afterlives'. The group understands literary afterlives as being constituted by complex interactions between 'glocal' processes, media factors, and subjectivities, and these literary afterlives take the form of different modes of rewritings and (re)appropriations that enable past stories and texts to have future lives in different cultural, political, and temporal contexts. The notion of a literary afterlife does not signify a break with the precursor text. It is conceptualised as a multidirectional dialogue between antecedent texts and subsequent ones: in this case, Shakespearean works and their African afterlives.

Convened by Ifeoluwa Aboluwade (University of Bayreuth), Serena Talento

(University of Bayreuth), Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong (Humboldt University Berlin) and Oliver Nyambi (University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa), the Postdoc Working Group critically reflected on the dialogical and dialectical intersections generated by the multifaceted polylogue between Shakespearean works and their African (Diasporic) appropriations. Their research output contributes to transregional perspectives on African Literary Studies by conceptualising and elucidating its complex relations to Shakespeare studies. The research in the working group was guided by theories of intersectionality, (cultural) memory, adaptation/translation, and postcolonial theory, and focused on finding answers to the following question: How do African (Diasporic) authors and directors re-imagine and re-articulate their nationalist, gendered, racial, and glocal futures and subjectivities through/in transcultural reworkings and appropriations of Shakespearean antecedents and topoi?

Reading Femi Osofisan's *Wesoo, Hamlet!*

The working group sought to provide answers to the above question through regular group discussions, two public lectures by Michael Steppat, Professor emeritus

of English Literature (University of Bayreuth) and Florian Klaeger, Professor of English (University of Bayreuth), a final workshop, and a public rehearsed reading of Femi Osofisan's *Wesoo, Hamlet!* by the theatre duo, Mahlatsi Mokgoyana and Billy Langa. The rehearsed reading was a form of public outreach to create awareness and a forum for discourse on the forms of interventions between a European canon, such as Shakespeare, and African authors, most especially within the realm of performance. Most people have read or at least heard about Shakespeare's Hamlet, but extremely few know of Osofisan's version of this play, *Wesoo, Hamlet!*

Research results

The results of the postdoc group's research were/will be disseminated via two main avenues: The first avenue was the workshop, which took place from 19 to 20 February 2020 with the theme *Shakespeare and Africa: Literary Entanglements Across Space and Time*. The second is a book volume with chapters contributed by the conveners of the working group and guest-contributors based both on the African continent and in Diaspora. This is still a work in progress.

In addition to the four workshop organisers, members of the University of Bay-

reuth, Cluster members, Cluster Fellows, as well as three external guests from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and the University of Leeds, UK, also participated in the workshop. The workshop fostered the exchange of ideas between the conveners and the guest participants on the research theme of the working group.

Talento analysed two Swahili translations of the Shakespearean play *The Merchant of Venice*. She illustrated how the Swahili translations – *Mabepari wa Venisi (The Capitalists of Venice)* translated by Julius Nyerere in 1969, and *Mlariba (The Usurer)* translated by Francis Warwick, a British resident of Kenya, in 1971 – were transformed and adapted to the new contexts of reception.

Aboluwade explored Osofisan's *Wesoo, Hamlet!* as a product of transcultural re/membling rather than one of simple adaptation or interlingual transfer. Through comparative analysis of Shakespeare's Hamlet (1623/2007) and Osofisan's *Wesoo, Hamlet!* (2012), she demonstrated how the rewriting of a text across cultures can be imagined as a mode of re/membling that is characterised by strategies of selective forgetting. This enables a profound dialectal interrogation of the epistemological premises of both the Shakespearean precursor and its contemporary Nigerian version.

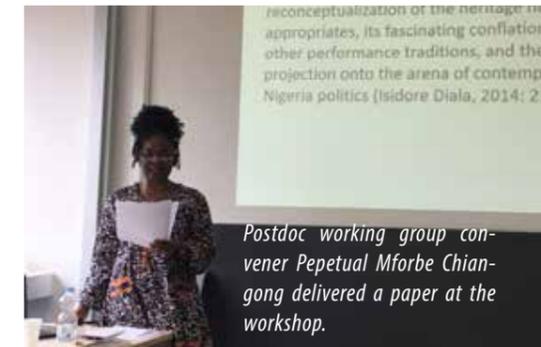
Chiangong investigated how the processes of interrogation and archiving are enacted by looking at how Aimé Césaire and Esiaba Irobi respond to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in their adaptations

of the play as *A Tempest* (1969) and *Sycorax* (2013), respectively.

Nyambi engaged critically with postcolonial notions of the 'global Shakespeare' with special interest in not only on how Shakespeare's political plays, philosophy, and aesthetics have influenced conceptions and/or practices of power in postcolonial Africa, but also what Shakespeare's influence tells us about the state and condition of decolonising power in the 'post-colony'.

The workshop presentations highlighted points of intersections between the research foci of the working group conveners and those of the workshop guests. The issue of translating/adapting Shakespearean texts across time and space in African contexts which was focused on by three of the conveners (Talento, Aboluwade, Chiangong) was also taken up by Sandra Young (University of Cape Town, South Africa). In her presentation, Young explored the problematics of deploying African adaptations of Shakespearean plays to address essentialist racial ideologies. Nyambi's examination of politicised appropriations of Shakespearean topoi to address African nationalist concerns resonated with Sam Ndogo's (Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya) analysis of the appropriation of the figure of the Shakespearean fool in Kenyan comedy as a potent way of subverting local hegemonies. Lekan Balogun's (University of Lagos, Nigeria) investigation of the hermeneutic relevance of Ifa system of knowledge for reading *Wesoo, Hamlet!* within the political context of Nigeria cut across all four research foci.

One of the benefits of the mutual research in the working group was that it emphasised the importance of mutual discourse and debate and openness to heterogeneous approaches, which is underscored by a need to critically reflect on individual and collective methods and theories. The research activities further opened an avenue for future interdisciplinary collaboration with like-minded scholars at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.



Postdoc working group convener Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong delivered a paper at the workshop.



Postdoc working group convener Oliver Nyambi



The first keynote lecture of the workshop was delivered by Sandra Young (University of Cape Town, South Africa).



Jane Plastow (University of Leeds, UK) at her keynote lecture during the workshop



Closing discussions with Theatre duo's Mahlatsi Mokgonyana and audience members at the rehearsed reading of *Wesoo Hamlet!* (Photo: Serena Talento)

Photos: Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong

Twelve more Projects Expand the Cluster's Research Portfolio

Text SABINE GREINER

In addition to the 25 existing research projects, the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence approved another twelve research proposals in 2020. While being anchored in one of the Cluster's research sections, the majority of these new projects is conducted in the African Cluster Centres.

Artivism, Social Justice & Epistemic Revolution

Ruth Simbao (Rhodes University) – Arts & Aesthetics
In light of the urgent need to respond to growing social inequality, citizens have become impatient and activism has given rise to critical artist-citizens or activists. While recent studies on activism and the arts tend to frame activism globally and draw from world events of 1989, this project complicates this starting point and emphasises contextual and situational forms of resistance and activism.

Sounding Africa on the Indian Ocean

Lee Watkins (Rhodes University) – Arts & Aesthetics
This project aims to research and archive African music and its vestiges on the Indian Ocean littoral and the islands of the south-western Indian Ocean. An international network of collaborators identifies suitable content, acquires metadata, and develops plans for accessibility of African music on the coastal and islands of the Indian Ocean.

East African Asian Writing and the Emergence of a Diasporic Subjectivity

Peter Simatei (Moi University) – Arts & Aesthetics
This research seeks to trace this emergence and read East African Indian writings as texts that are not only framed by the ambivalent and diasporic histories of Indians in imperial and postcolonial East Africa but also as writings that consciously construct ambivalent diasporic subjectivities as the basis of new forms of East African Indian identities.

Rethinking the Artistic Trajectory of African Women Artists

Patrick Oloko, Adepeju Layiwola (University of Lagos) – Arts & Aesthetics
This project engages with a variety of entertainment forms such as stand-up comedy, hip hop music, spo-

ken-word poetry and musicalized histories and biographies as popular entertainment 'forms' that are reshaping the cultural economies of African urban centres. They are often categorised as 'popular arts', a term of informality that obscures their capacities and promotes a reluctance of the academy to engage with them as repositories of social knowledge.

Of Art Worlds – Collecting and Archiving Modern and Contemporary Art on the African Continent

Ulf Vierke, Katharina Greven (University of Bayreuth) – Arts & Aesthetics
This project takes inspiration from a perspective on multiplicity that brings art collections and archives as multi-layered configurations to the forefront. Starting with the art works as such, carving out their formal qualities, moving on to the respective object biographies, these are related to form and histories of the collections and the respective institutions.

Women as Sages: Exploring the nature and value of Feminine Wisdom

Muyiwa Falaiye (University of Lagos) – Knowledges
In this agenda-setting work the research team seeks to investigate the possibility of woman sages, the nature and content of the form of knowledge they produce, and the value of such knowledges to the contemporary African and others.

Regenerating Non-Formal Learning in Africa: Digitizing Yorùbá Folktales for Animation and Value Education

Ayodele Yusuff, Abisoye Eleshin, (University of Lagos) – Learning
This research, which aims to produce African contents, specifically Yorùbá, for children's entertainment and moral learning, is an attempt to create an indigenous alternative to oriental and occidental animations using Yorùbá folktales.

Spatio-temporal variability in the environment and mobility characterizes socio-ecological systems in large regions of tropical Africa, especially in savannah ecosystems

Steve Higgins, Cyrus Samimi, Qirui Li, Martin Doeven-speck, Stefan Ouma, James Gambiza, Wayne Twine, Coleen Vogel, Heila Lotz-Sisitka – Mobilities
The project will investigate the patterns of move-

ment and processes of mobility, and explore their interactions with climatic variations, environmental processes, and cultural and socio-economic drivers.

Intra-Africa Migration and Xenophobia: The Imperatives for African Integration

Franca Attoh, Olukayode Eesuola – Affiliation and Mobilities

This research project focuses on migration-xenophobia nexus in Nigeria and Burkina Faso with implications for African integration. The combination of Francophone and Anglophone experiences over intra-African migration promises to enrich literature, promote inter ACCs cooperation, as well as raise new debates and theories especially towards the integrationist visions and missions of the AU and the ECOWAS.

Politics and Societies of the Marginalised

Enocent Msindo (Rhodes University) – Mobilities
This project examines how communities, or peoples on the geographical margins of African states have (historically) exercised agency by creating alternative centres of power and by engaging in some unusual, unpredictable, and at times 'deviant' practices (from a statist point of view) in order to circumvent the state that often fail to service their needs.

Globalization and health policy in West Africa

Yacouba Banhoro (University Joseph-Ki Zerbo) – Moralities
The project's goal is to understand not only the impact of global health on regional and local health systems reforms, but also to produce knowledge from a Global Health governance perspective that will help to grasp the shifting movement in international relations towards the globalization.

Changing Life Projects: African Identities, Moralities and Wellbeing

Eunice Kamaara (Moi University) – Moralities
The projects explores and analyses identities, moralities and moralities-making in contemporary East Africa towards understanding how these are (re) defined, communicated, contested, (re)negotiated, re(invented) and practiced through rites of passage, such as initiation rites and marriages.



For a more detailed overview of all current 37 Cluster projects, please visit:

Photo: AdobeStock



Getting Out of the COVID-19 Misery

Text RAYMOND BOADI FREMPONG, DAVID STADELMANN, FREDERIK WILD

In their article published by the Economics Bulletin, Raymond Frempong, David Stadelmann and Frederik Wild discuss the secondary effects of lockdowns in Sub-Saharan Africa and show which strategies might help with the challenges that subsequently arise.

The COVID-19 crisis is one of the most critical health challenges of the last century. In many ways, the pandemic has brought about severe hardships on citizens. The development and introduction of vaccines promise to restore societies back to normality. The article *Coronavirus-Lockdowns, Secondary Effects and Sustainable Exit-Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa* written by Raymond Frempong, David Stadelmann and Frederik Wild from the University of Bayreuth and published in *Economics Bulletin* 40 (3) highlights the side-effects of lockdowns imposed in many Sub-Saharan African countries based on a set of distinct characteristics that make the region unique. Above all, comparatively skewed demographics (young populations) and the lack of substantial financial resources render the direct health consequences of COVID-19 different than in older societies. Over the course of the pandemic, the death rates have

remained relatively low compared to countries in Europe, even though health systems in many African countries are underfunded.

The negative side-effects of lockdown

While lockdowns help curtail the disease, they carry negative side-effects in the form of economic, social, political, and even other medical hardships, which matter in developing economies. Among the most severe side-effects of lockdowns in Sub-Saharan African countries are disruptions to food- and vital medical (treatment) supply. Disruptions to the therapy of other widespread and infectious diseases, such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, have been estimated to potentially exceed the direct health consequences of COVID-19. Also, increased incidences of domestic violence against the weakest members of society have been reported. And education opportunities are only available with difficulties, carrying burdensome private expenses in several countries. Tendencies to weaken economic and political institutions have also been documented.

Hence, as it stands, the problem of many developing countries in dealing with the pandemic is not only the number of infected people but weak health systems and the unintended secondary impacts of lockdowns that carry on in the future.

A healthy population is a 'good' with a high value, but a strong economy has been closely linked to the health of its citizens and their life expectancy. General societal effects of lockdowns and recessions are vast, and they disproportionately affect societies' most vulnerable. Educational systems have not been brought back to normal everywhere, which will entail costs for society in the long-run, especially in developing countries where human capital is highly relevant.

Possible exit strategies

Countries in the region have begun vaccination rollouts. The infection rates reported by the number of cases understate the actual cases by an order of magnitude. The exact number of convalescents, i.e., people who have recovered and required some natural immunity to the disease, is unknown. Current evidence shows that naturally acquired immunity can last for at least a year, and it is broadly comparable to vaccine-induced immunity. An effective and efficient immunization strategy in poorer regions should also consider convalescents who have obtained natural immunity. This helps to avoid an unduly prolongation of economic and social restrictions, especially for the poor and for countries whose budgets and economies are suffering the most. Sub-Saharan Africa countries depend on the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative for their vaccination campaigns. Governments in the region may investigate other innovative and equally effective, but less costly ways out of the current situation. Recognizing convalescence may be a cost-effective means to relax restrictions and gradually bring society back to the total pre-Corona capacity. 🌍

from left: David Stadelmann, Raymond Frempong, Frederik Wild





From left: Martina Drescher, Oumarou Boukari, Jean-Benoît Tsofack, Valentin Feussi and Laura Guadagnano (Photo: Melanie Steeger)

COVID-19 Taking the Centre Stage in a Cluster Project that Investigates Health Discourses as Privileged Spaces for Moral Communication

Text: MARTINA DRESCHER, OUMAROU BOUKARI

Although the pandemic hindered the activities of the Cluster project on health discourses, the project team still managed to advance in their endeavour.

The project *Health discourse as moral communication? Linguistic case study from Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon* carried out by Martina Drescher and Oumarou Boukari together with the project partner and external cluster member Jean-Benoît Tsofack from the University of Dschang, Cameroon and BIGSAS doctorate Laura Guadagnano, started in October 2019. It is part of the research section 'Moralities', and thus explores

the different facets of doing ethics in the realm of health.

Initially meant to investigate different diseases, and more generally health-related issues and their discourses, the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020 led to a refocusing on COVID-19 discourse. With the exception of the PhD project dedicated to questions of reproductive health and particularly to early pregnancy in the Ivory Coast, all project members decided to concentrate on COVID-19 discourse. Due to travel restrictions, Bayreuth-based researchers were and are still unable to do field research on their own. Thus, in summer 2020, Carline Liliane Ngawa Mbaho, a former BIGSAS Junior Fellow and now researcher at the Université des Montagnes (Bangangté, Cameroon), joined

the team. In charge of the data collection for the Cameroonian part of the project, Ngawa Mbaho organised focus group discussions and conducted interviews with about one hundred people of different social backgrounds who talked about their perception of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on their lives. These audio-taped conversations include currently more than 25 hours already partly transcribed and analysed. A similar and thus comparable database has been compiled for the Ivorian part of the project. These two large databases are now waiting for a close and systematic analysis. A first pilot study on *Beaucoup de peur et de questionnement. Une étude comparative des discours sur le COVID-19 en Côte d'Ivoire et au Cameroun*, adopting a relational and comparative perspective on the pandemic,

will be published soon in the volume on *COVID-19 en Afrique: Les multiples dimensions des soins et de santé*, compiled by Susan Arndt et al. on Covid-19.

Kick-off workshop provides opportunity for exchange in January

A kick-off workshop that brought together the project members and invited speakers in January 2020 provided an opportunity for exchange on theoretical and methodological issues, to conceptualise key terms like 'ethics' and 'morals' from a linguistic perspective, to explore possible fields for data collection, and thus to establish a common ground for future research. Talks alternated with data sessions and more theoretically-oriented discussions. Project member Tsofack gave a talk on *Discours sur la santé et (im)moral(ité) publique: quand l'émotion s'invite dans la vente des médic-*

insights with a broader audience that included also Master students in Franco-phone Studies. Finally, Joe Spencer-Bennett, a Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the University of Birmingham, UK, who specialises in research on moral talk, gave an insightful and well-attended lecture on *"Moral talk: debates on its forms, functions and value in political life"* in the Cluster's Knowledge Lab. Author of a monograph on *"Moral Talk"*, published 2018 (London, Routledge), Spencer-Bennett is one of the few scholars interested in ethics from a linguistic and discourse analytic perspective and thus a privileged cooperation partner whose work contributed in a crucial way to the conceptualisation of moral communication. The vibrant Q&A session showed that the issues he raised in his talk were of great interest not only to the members of our project and the 'Moralities'

research section, but also to a broader cluster audience. Finally, Silke Jansen, chair of Romance languages at the University of Erlangen, presented a pilot study on verbal violence against Latin American migrants in Erlangen and Nuremberg, that, although not directly connected to our research agenda on health-related discourses, touched on different aspects of moral communication and offered valuable comparative elements.

The project's outlook

A second workshop planned for the end of the summer term 2020 had unfortunately to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Hence, the COVID-19 crisis has had very ambivalent consequences for the Cluster project: On the one hand, it provides the team members with brand new and interesting examples of health discourses. On the other hand, it blocks their work in various ways since the project members are not able to travel, to do field research by themselves, or to participate in conferences. In the future, the team plans to investigate further aspects of COVID-19 discourses by

Health discourses as moral communication? Linguistic case studies from Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon

The project zooms in on moral communication in Ivory Coast and Cameroon. It adopts a comparative perspective and engages with everyday moral talk in the domain of health. Since the articulation of ordinary ethics and language is still under-investigated, the project team aims to contribute to this rather new intersectional field of study by bringing forward a specific linguistic understanding of moral communication. They refer to constructivist and phenomenological conceptualizations of ethics assuming that there are no moral phenomena, but only moral communication about phenomena. According to such a view, conversationalists constantly and co-constructively bring about the moral meaning of a state of affair or an event. The paramount aim is to investigate the interactive processes by which moralities emerge and are negotiated in communication. In order to study these relational and interactional aspects, the team tackles two main, closely intertwined research questions: 1. Which are the forms and 2. Which are the functions of moral communication? In order to integrate both aspects we prioritise an empirical approach and resort to qualitative and interpretative methods by drawing on theoretical insights from Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics. The team expects to contribute first to a better theoretical framing of doing ethics by focusing on its linguistic and communicative aspects and second to advance its empirical study by means of a comparative data-based analysis which targets its most prominent forms and functions in specific media and face to face settings.

focussing on inclusion/exclusion phenomena and on counselling activities. In this perspective, Drescher and Ngawa Mbaho are preparing a paper on *Nous sommes beaucoup plus forts que les Européens – Social/Ethnic Positioning and Moral Reasoning in Cameroonian Discourse on COVID-19* that will be given in June 2021 at the next conference of the International Pragmatic Association. In addition, some project members will consider the role of interjections and discourse markers in relation to ethics. And with less travel restrictions, the team is hopeful that fieldwork and more lively academic exchanges will again be possible.



Joe Spencer-Bennett during his lecture on moral talk at the University of Bayreuth. (Photo: Laura Guadagnano)

aments de rue au Cameroun, where he highlighted the central role of emotions in moral communication and their different verbal and non-verbal manifestations in Cameroonian health discourse. Valentin Feussi, a Senior Lecturer in Sociolinguistics and Didactics of Languages (SODILANG) at the University François Rabelais in Tours, France, shared in a talk entitled *De Manessy à Humboldt: enjeux épistémologiques d'une approche expérimentale des 'français' en Afrique francophone* his critical epistemological

nately to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Hence, the COVID-19 crisis has had very ambivalent consequences for the Cluster project: On the one hand, it provides the team members with brand new and interesting examples of health discourses. On the other hand, it blocks their work in various ways since the project members are not able to travel, to do field research by themselves, or to participate in conferences. In the future, the team plans to investigate further aspects of COVID-19 discourses by

Reconfiguring Mobility Struggles – From a Cancelled Workshop in Kampala to Sprint Lecture Podcasts

Text JOCHEN LINGELBACH

At a time, when mobility was limited on a global scale, it seemed inevitable that the Cluster of Excellence's Research Section Mobilities was especially affected. But the research team found new ways to bring forward its topics.

The year 2020 did not go as planned, and this had a lot to do with mobility. Mobile people spread a virus around the globe, leading to mobility restrictions like closed borders, compulsory quarantine, stay-at-home orders, and lockdowns. In ways that were unthinkable before, mobility was hindered or severely slowed down. Measures to contain the pandemic led to a reconfiguration of the possibilities for people to move. This situation spoke directly to the thematic core of the Research Section 'Mobilities.' Additionally, this enforced immobility impacted the activities of the research section.

The workshop *Understanding Africa's Mobility Struggles* planned for the end of March 2020 in Uganda had to be cancelled on short notice. Field research was mostly impossible, especially if it involved international travel or access to archives. Many colleagues could come only virtually to Bayreuth, and cooper-

ation with the African Cluster Centres had to rely on electronic communication without real face-to-face engagement. Nevertheless, the research section came up with new, innovative formats like the virtual Sprint Lecture series to reach a broader audience. These short lectures on planetary mobility struggles are publicly available as podcasts on the Cluster's website.

A workshop in Kampala that was not

In March 2020, researchers of the Cluster's Research Section 'Mobilities' were busy finishing the preparations for an international interdisciplinary workshop titled *Understanding Africa's Mobility Struggles* to be held at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. The research team had invited some 20 scholars from 14 countries to reflect and discuss struggles around the differential mobility of people, things, and ideas. The workshop covered a wide range of issues around mobility struggles within, into, and out of Africa, from a great variety of disciplinary perspectives. Among other things the concept read: "The mobility of the people of the 'majority world' is actively controlled, contained, and restricted" and "African scholars are more likely to be denied visas to attend international conferences – which not only implies restrictions to their own mobility, but

also the mobility of their knowledge." In contrast, "A European traveling to Africa in most cases only needs a plane ticket, and without much interrogation, is privileged to enter a country by use of the so-called 'visa-on-arrival'."

One of the reasons to locate this workshop in Uganda was to ease the mobility and access of African scholars. We were well aware of the problems and difficulties that African scholars have to go through to get permission to take part in a workshop in Germany. Uganda, in contrast, boasts a comparably liberal immigration regime. Traveling to Uganda is visa-free for citizens of nearly 20 African countries. And except for Somalians, citizens of all countries in the world are allowed to enter after filling in a simple e-visa application form and paying 50 USD. This is a far cry from the difficult and laborious process of getting a visa to Germany or another European country.

Reconfiguring mobility struggles

As we all know now, mobility profoundly changed over the last year. On 7 March 2020, the Ugandan Minister of Health, Jane Ruth Aceng, announced that to contain the spread of COVID-19, travelers from seven countries had to undergo 14 days of self-quarantine. Germany

and France were among the seven countries on the list, directly affecting two organisers and two additional workshop participants. After three days of discussions, the organisation team decided with a heavy heart that it was necessary to postpone the workshop to an unknown future date. On 22 March 2020, Uganda confirmed its first COVID-19 case. Directly thereafter, Entebbe airport was closed for nearly half a year as the Ugandan government declared a strict lockdown. The research team thought of postponing to June, then September, until they gradually realised that an in-person workshop with participants from 14 countries would not happen any time soon.

While most of the time European immigration authorities categorise Africans and other non-Europeans as potentially dangerous, now Germans had become the dangerous group. Still, it was only a 14-day quarantine and not the complete ban that most people face when they try to enter the European Union. Moreover, postponing a workshop pales in comparison with the plight of people who were brutally hindered from crossing Europe's southern borders at the same time. Despite the gloomy prognosis of the pandemic's impact in Africa, the continent recorded only a few COVID-19 cases in 2020. Victims of the disease were mainly in Europe, the Americas, and India. Accordingly, the last year saw a temporary reconfiguration of mobility regimes happening around the world.

During the last year, COVID-19 travelled the globe, and with the movement of pandemic hotspots, travel restrictions were constantly changing. While people from the Global North are still privileged in their international mobility, COVID-related travel restrictions have changed this somewhat. Some of the passports that have hitherto given their owners the privilege of unfettered international mobility have become red flags for immigration officers in less-affected countries. According to the Henley Passport Index, German passport holders have the third-best passport in the world. The index shows the number of countries the respective passport holders are able to enter without a visa. Looking at the constantly changing list of travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 outbreak, it became clear that something

was changing in international mobility – at least temporarily.

And there were also reconfigurations and struggles over mobility within countries. In some places, people were not allowed to leave their houses, villages, or districts. This situation produced new forms of 'mobility transactions' by creating polarised mobility spaces where power became fundamental to determine who moves, and how, where, and at what time. Containing people thus became not only a necessity to contain the spread of the virus: For those charged with the power of restricting mobility, 'trading mobility' became a way to extract resources from people in need of moving. The spaces for struggles and restrictions changed into 'transactional spaces' where the population struggled to find the 'resources' to entangle in or the strategies to bypass the new restricted spaces of mobility transactions.

Going online: Sprint Lecture Podcasts

The pandemic confirmed that mobility – as a context-specific ensemble of movement, representations of this movement, and concrete mobile practices – is political. Realizing that it would take a long time until in-person meetings were possible, members of the research section developed online forms to continue engaging with these issues. The Sprint Lectures on African Mobilities are a forum to discuss who moves furthest, fastest, most often, and who does not move, and for what reasons. We are interested in understanding (im)mobility as a privilege and what (forced or voluntary) mobility and immobility means for various groups and why.

The main advantage of a virtual format – apart from the impossibility of transmitting the virus – is the ease with which scholars from elsewhere can be invited to present and discuss their work. There is no need to organise visas, airplane tickets, hotel accommodation, catering, projectors, and the like. Some email communication, online advertisement, and an internet connection suffice. Another advantage is the opportunity to record and make discussions available online easily. The most significant drawbacks are the lack of direct personal interaction during the event, and before and after it. There is no informal chatting during dinner, over a beer, or a coffee. Other

drawbacks are the limited timespan people are able to mentally focus in video conferences and the sheer endless possibilities to partake in online seminars and lectures. The Sprint Lecture format is a way to tackle some of these problems. It follows a '20-20 time schedule' – 20 minutes of presentation followed by 20 minutes of discussion. And it is made available as a podcast. Interested listeners can stream or download the audio file of the lecture and listen to it while doing the laundry or the dishes.

In November 2020, the research group started with the series and welcomed geographer Parvati Raghuram from The Open University, UK, as our very first guest. She presented a talk entitled *Democratising, stretching, entangling, transversing: Four moves for reshaping migration categories*. Next was a lecture by the research section member and political scientist Nadine Machikou from the University of Yaoundé, Cameroon, presenting her project *Invisible Intellectuals* focusing on African academic mobility and the situation of endangered scholars from the continent. With the third Sprint Lecture, we came back full circle from the cancelled Kampala workshop. The research section's spokesperson Martin Döevenspeck and postdoctoral researcher Paddy Kinyera analysed the politicised impact of COVID-19 on (im)mobility in Uganda. When the travel restrictions started, Kinyera had been on field research in Uganda and was preparing the workshop on the spot. Stuck in Uganda, he made the best of this challenging situation. He studied subaltern mobility struggles: the ways in which the Ugandan government restricted mobility and how people navigated this restrictive environment. In the last lecture of the winter semester, sociologist Larissa Schindler engaged with the impact of restricted mobility on discussing digital methodologies. The Sprint Lectures are an ongoing project and a great example of how the pandemic accelerated the development of innovative formats.

All the podcast episodes – and the upcoming talks – are available on the Cluster's website:





Participants of the research project's inaugural workshop
"Data and Theoretical Perspectives on Colonial Letters"

Colonial Letters and the Contact of Knowledges

Text GLORY ESSIEN OTUNG, ERIC A. ANCHIMBE
Photos GLORY ESSIEN OTUNG

A group of researchers led by Eric Anchimbe scrutinises colonial correspondence between British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria-Britain. Now, one year into the project, the group shares its preliminary findings.

It has been one full year since the project *Colonial Letters and the Contact of Knowledges* started as part of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth. With ten members and a doctoral researcher working from four countries (Germany, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana), this predominantly linguistic research examines the instantiations of colonial contact and postcolonial heritages that are embodied in, and transmitted through, letters written during British colonisation of Southern Cameroons (1916–1961). It focuses on the construction of multiple identities and the discursive enactment of (social, political, hereditary) power. The colonial correspondences collected from archives in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Britain serve as lenses into these

processes, and are studied from sociolinguistic, critical discourse analysis, literary, historical, and postcolonial linguistic perspectives.

Two major events were carried out in this first year. These are the inaugural workshop (5 to 7 March 2020), and the lecture series (July–September 2020). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the fieldwork trips planned for 2020 were postponed.

Inaugural workshop: *Data and Theoretical Perspectives on Colonial Letters*

Organised under the theme *Data and Theoretical Perspectives on Colonial Letters*, the aim of the inaugural workshop that took place on 5–7 March 2020 was to identify and consolidate data sources and to streamline interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives for analysing the data. It was attended by all members of the project team as well as members and guests of the Cluster and the University of Bayreuth. The workshop kicked off with a welcome speech by the Dean of the Cluster, Rüdiger Seesemann. He thanked the team members for coming to Bayreuth and encouraged them to

join the rest of the Cluster in achieving its major goal of reconfiguring African Studies through its key concepts of multiplicity, relationality, and reflexivity. In his introduction, the project coordinator, Eric Anchimbe, outlined the aims of the project, central to which is to study instantiations of colonial contact and postcolonial heritages that are embodied in, and transmitted through, the colonial letters.

Workshop participants had the opportunity to explore the university library under the guidance of Vera Butz. This specialised tour focused on the historical holdings and specifically on colonial exchanges. After introducing participants to various catalogues of the library, Butz narrowed down the shelves, compartments, and digital resources relevant to British colonialism and colonial correspondences.

The three disciplinary perspectives involved in the project, namely linguistics, history, and literature, were discussed extensively with focus on how the data could be analysed through interdisciplinary approaches. Gratien Atindogbe from the University of Buea, Cameroon,

explained how the linguistic perspective could, among other things, identify and examine strategies of multiple identity construction and power structures. The discussant of the session, Valentine Ubanako, from the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, added other aspects, including colonial and indigenous repertoires, patterns of knowledge production, and the question of authorship of colonial letters and the choices of words, expressions, and text types of letter writing.

The historical perspective was presented by Emmanuel Kengo from the University of Buea, Cameroon, who provided a detailed account of political events, political strategisation, and political manoeuvring during the British colonisation of Southern Cameroons. He traced the trajectory of the transportation of these letters through Nigeria to London and the administrative relevance of each stop, hence adding more meaning to the discourses produced in the letters. As discussant of this session, Uche Oyali of the University of Abuja, Nigeria, accentuated the impact of British indirect rule, in which indigenous administrators were recruited to exact power over the subjects. The issue of authorship of colonial letters is also significant from a historical perspective given the role played by trained letter writers, translators, or interpreters.

The literary perspective treats colonial letters as authentic sources of colonial storytelling. Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong from Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, explained that colonial letters could be classified as life-writing and read using a literary lens: the authors acting as characters, narrating events in their lives, and in the lives of those around them. The letters contribute immensely to the understanding of the colonial context which depicts power imbalance between the sender and receiver. The discussant, Sarah Marjie from the University of Ghana, added that the literary perspective could allow for the assessment of possible linguistic creativity and innovations of ordinary or standard use of the English language in the letters – a significant step in the development of African epistemologies.

The PhD session was dedicated to the work of the project's doctoral researcher, Glory Essien Otung of the University of Bayreuth, Germany. After presenting her PhD research project, *Identities and power in colonial letters: British Southern*

Cameroons (1916–1961), Otung received feedback from the participants. As some of the participants had done initial fieldwork in archives in Cameroon and Nigeria, they gave her advice on how to deal with the archives.

A highlight of the workshop was the presentation of the Cluster's Digital Research Environment (DRE) by the Cluster's Digital Solutions team made up of Anja Dreiser, Myriell Fichtner, and Philipp Eisenhuth. They explained how the corpus of the project could be stored, annotated, and used for research from different locations. Their input was timely and highly commendable because the research project will put together a corpus of colonial letters searchable through the DRE of the Cluster.

traced *The quest for change and its implications as evidenced in colonial letters from British Southern Cameroons*; Otung examined *Moving spaces: Place identity in colonial letters*; Chiangong presented *'I was brought up to ask questions': Narrative voice and identity in colonial correspondences?*; Atindogbe's lecture was titled *Linguistics in the colonial world: Speech Acts, orality and epistolarity*. Oyali dealt with *Legitimising and resisting colonial power structures in the Manga William letters*; and Ubanako described *Obsequiousness in colonial writing: Evidence from selected colonial letters from British Southern Cameroons*. The lectures offered an insight to the rich data collected so far, and will form the basis for the edited volume envisaged.



Lecture series: *Colonial correspondences: Engaging with data*

To compensate for time lost to the pandemic, a weekly Zoom lecture series was organised from 15 July 2020 to 16 September 2020. Every Wednesday evening from 6–8 pm, the team met to follow up on the tasks and outcomes of the inaugural workshop and to present initial research findings from the data. Some sessions were dedicated to readings of major texts in the disciplinary and theoretical perspectives of the project.

Eight lectures were held on topics ranging from interdisciplinary perspectives anchored in critical discourse analysis, to new historicism, and the coloniality of power. Anchimbe presented on The pen of colonialism: *Issues of power and identity*; Marjie discussed *Indirectness in colonial letters: Evidence from British Cameroon and Ghana*; Julius Eyoh (ENS, University of Yaounde I, Cameroon)

Project Members

Eric A. Anchimbe (Project Coordinator)

Glory Essien Otung (PhD Researcher)

Sarah Marjie (University of Ghana)

Stephen A. Mforfeh
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Gratien G. Atingbode
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Emmanuel E. Kengo
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Valentine N. Ubanako
(University of Yaounde I)
Uche Oyali (University of Abuja)

Peptual Mforbe Chiangong
(Humboldt University Berlin)

Boniface Mbah
(University of Nigeria, Nsukka)

DAAD Prize 2020 Awarded to Hanza Diman

For his excellent academic performance and notable extracurricular activities, the University of Bayreuth awarded Hanza Diman with the DAAD Prize in 2020. Diman, born in Comé, Benin, first came to Germany in 2011, conducting literature research in Bayreuth for his studies at the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin. Following this six-month stay, he decided to do his Master's degree at the University of Bayreuth with a focus on African history and Francophone studies.

Diman has been a Junior Fellow of BIGSAS since 2016, doing his doctorate on the history of the use and supply of kitchen wood in urban households in West Africa. In BIGSAS, he also served as a Junior Fellow Representative for two semesters and has been an integral part of the BIGSAS football team. Furthermore, Diman was actively engaged in the project BIGSAS@school for several years and became the coordinator of the follow-up project Afrika@school.

In addition to his doctoral studies, Diman is involved in a wide range of social and socio-political activities. He is co-founder of the Model African Union Association in Bayreuth, as well as founder of the think-and-do tank Africa Politicum that brings together the expertise of African intellectuals and researchers, especially those based in Bayreuth and enrolled at BIGSAS. Diman's engagement in German-African institutions is rounded off by his work in the Farafina Institut e.V. and the Central Council of the African Community in Germany.

Text: Juliane Fender



Gemechu Adimassu Abeshu Receives Preis der Stadt Bayreuth for his Dissertation

BIGSAS alumnus Gemechu Adimassu Abeshu has been awarded the City of Bayreuth Award (Preis der Stadt Bayreuth) 2020 for his dissertation *New Forms of Power in the Afar Region of Ethiopia: The Rise of Big Men near the Ethiopia and Djibouti Border*.

"We learn from Gemechu's work how Afar's new Big Man has constructed political power through the assertion of monopoly over land and natural resources in the area. While the rise to power has undermined traditional authorities (clan elders), the Big Man nonetheless operates within the Afar moral universe," said Georg Klute, Abeshu's doctoral supervisor. Abeshu's dissertation is an important contribution to anthropology and has been distinguished with the highest grades.

Abeshu joined BIGSAS in April 2015 after having completed two Master degrees. Since then, he has been highly motivated and engaged profusely in the scientific discourse. Abeshu's field research took him to the 'zone of danger' – the Afar region in northeast Ethiopia, where he faced the risk of arrest and death threats from the Big Man. Nevertheless, he succeeded in compiling valuable data and defended his dissertation in 2019. Abeshu is now a policy consultant working in Canada on several projects.

Text: Juliane Fender



Monika Christine Rohmer the new Research Associate at Chair of Afrikanistik II

Monika Christine Rohmer was appointed Research Associate at the Chair of Afrikanistik II in November 2020. Rohmer holds a BA in Social Sciences and Philosophy with a focus on Political Science from the University of Leipzig and an MA in African Verbal and Visual Arts from the University of Bayreuth. In her Master thesis, she approached non-migration from a literary perspective. The thesis centred on Senegalese women waiting for the return of an emigrated loved one. Currently, Rohmer is working in the context of ecolinguistics. In her dissertation, she explores the idea of a fluid ecosophy encoded in the Wolof language. Rohmer succeeds Rémi Armand Tchokothe, who accepted a tenure-track professorship at the University of Vienna.

Text: Monika Rohmer



Sabrina Maurus Receives Preis der Stadt Bayreuth for her Dissertation

BIGSAS alumna Sabrina Maurus won the Preis der Stadt Bayreuth (City of Bayreuth Award) for her dissertation entitled *Battles over State Making on a Frontier – Dilemmas of Schooling, Young People and Agro-Pastoralism in Hamar, Southwest Ethiopia*. The city of Bayreuth honors outstanding dissertations across all disciplines of the University of Bayreuth. In 2020, one of the prizes went to Maurus' dissertation written in the field of Social Anthropology and graded with summa cum laude.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in southwest Ethiopia, Maurus shows how the implementation of compulsory schooling created a literal battlefield in the Hamar district that is widely overlooked. Maurus analyses the violent conflict from the perspective of first-generation students to show and conceptualise the dilemmas of making a future between the expectations of agro-pastoral parents and the developmental state. The dissertation demonstrates how heterarchical political actors use children and education to fight over power on the frontier of the state.

Before being appointed to BIGSAS, Maurus studied Comparative Studies in Cultures and Religions in Marburg and Social and Cultural Anthropology in Bayreuth and Bordeaux, France. She taught in Social Anthropology at the University of Bayreuth. As a postdoctoral researcher in the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Maurus continues to study the educational trajectories of youths in and beyond schools, but now in Benin. Due to the pandemic, the prize money was awarded but the public celebration has been postponed.

Text: Sabrina Maurus



Omar Egesah – A Passion for Academic Collaboration

With profound sadness the African Studies community of the University of Bayreuth received the news about the passing of Omar Egesah, Professor of Anthropology at Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya, in March 2021.

His manifold expertise and contributions enriched BIGSAS as much as the Africa Multiple Cluster. As a founding member of AMAS (Academic Mobility for African Sustainable Development), Egesah vastly contributed to the successful application of the BIGSAS-Partner University's network within the EU-Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme in 2016, which he guided with dedication. Apart from his commitment to building institutional bridges, Egesah had great passion for anthropological research. He became one of the most active researchers in the Cluster, forging ties with the 'Mobilities' Research Section, connecting with scholars at the other ACCs, leading a project on mobility on the Kenya-Uganda highway, while participating in other research projects.

During his collaboration with colleagues at the University of Bayreuth, Egesah became an instrumental member of the research community and also a friend to many. He died on 18 March 2021.

Text: Rüdiger Seesemann, Christine Scherer



Jamil M. Abun-Nasr

First Holder of the Chair of Islamic Studies with Focus on Africa

Jamil Abun-Nasr, the first holder of the Chair of Islamic Studies with Focus on Africa at the University of Bayreuth, passed away on 10 April 2021. Born in 1932, in al-Bassa, Palestine, he was forced to flee to Lebanon along with his family in 1948. After a stint at Beirut University College he moved to Oxford in 1958, eventually becoming a true citizen of the world while remaining Palestinian at heart. At St. Antony's College he embarked on his first research, which focused on the history of the Tijaniyya Sufi order in the Maghrib and West Africa and earned him his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies in 1961. Thereafter, Jamil Abun-Nasr worked as Assistant Professor at the Center of Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University (1962) before moving on to the University of Ghana. Further teaching positions followed at American University Beirut (1963–1966), Fourah Bay College in Free Town/Sierra Leone (1966–1967) and at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (1968–1974).



In September 1974, Jamil Abun-Nasr came to Berlin, where he first worked as an Alexander von Humboldt research fellow and later received a Volkswagen grant. In September 1980, he was invited to teach Islamic Studies at the then emerging University of Bayreuth and asked to set up a teaching programme for this discipline. In 1985, he was appointed to the newly established Chair of Islamic Studies with a focus on Islam in Africa, which he held until his retirement in 1997. He also played a prominent role in founding the Institute of African Studies at the University of Bayreuth, where he acted as managing director from 1991 until 1993. Through the emphasis on empirical research in various projects initiated at his Chair, as well as through his regional focus on Africa that was long marginalized in German Islamic Studies, Jamil Abun-Nasr was instrumental in opening up a field that was formerly dominated by text-based approaches and a Middle Eastern bias.

Text: Roman Loimeier

Doris Löhr Appointed Chair of CrossArea e.V.

In November 2020, Doris Löhr, the Academic Coordinator of the Internationalisation and Public Engagement department of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, was appointed chair of CrossArea e.V., the Association for Transregional Studies, Comparative Area Studies, and Global Studies in Germany.

Löhr succeeds Andreas Mehler (Director of FRIAS and the Africa Centre for Transregional Research, Freiburg), as whose deputy she acted from 2018-2020. Funded by the Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF), CrossArea e.V. was founded in 2014 as a result of an initiative for a stronger and long-term cooperation between Area Studies Centres and networks with corresponding university and non-university institutes. It aims to expand the radius of action and intensify networking between research institutions, projects, and undertakings active in Area Studies.

With a doctorate in African linguistics, Löhr was a postdoctoral researcher at universities in Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Hamburg, engaging in several interdisciplinary DFG projects. Her regional focus includes Nigeria and the Lake Chad area, where she conducted research on language contact, Central Chadic languages, and the dialectology of Kanuri-Kanembu. In 2012, she joined the University of Bayreuth as Coordinator and Managing Director of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies (funded by the BMBF as part of the initiative *Strengthening and further development of the Area Studies*), and its project *Future Africa – Visions in time* a position she held until 2019.



Text: Sabine Greiner

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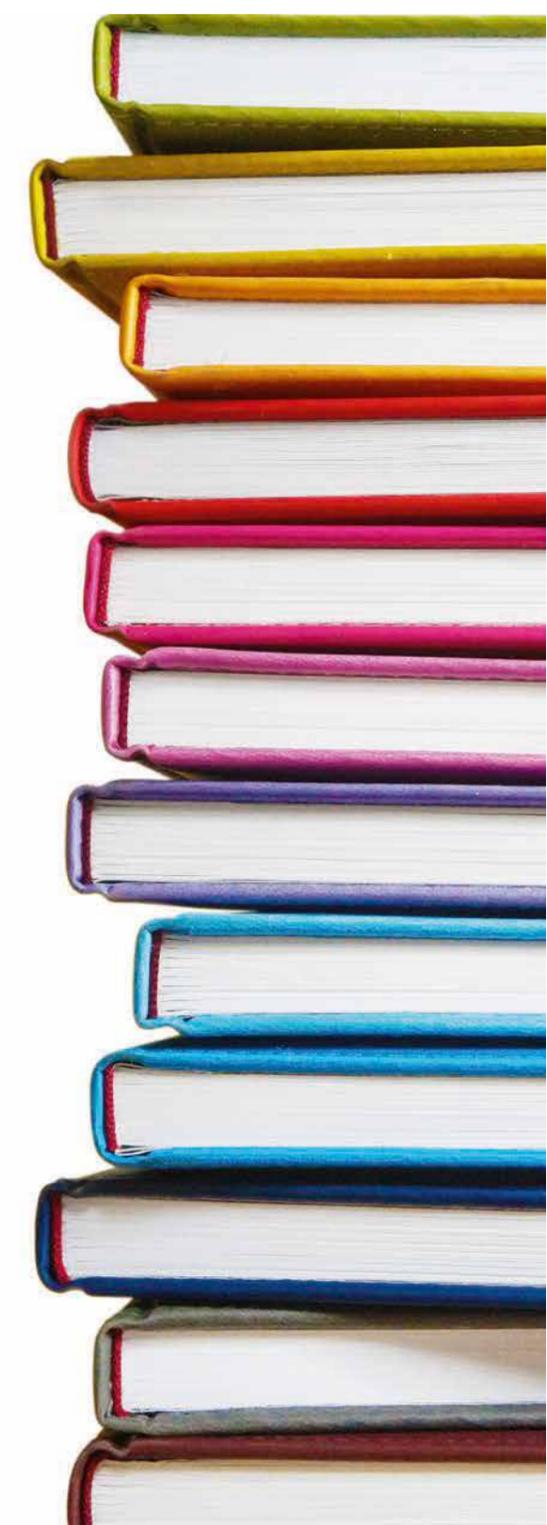
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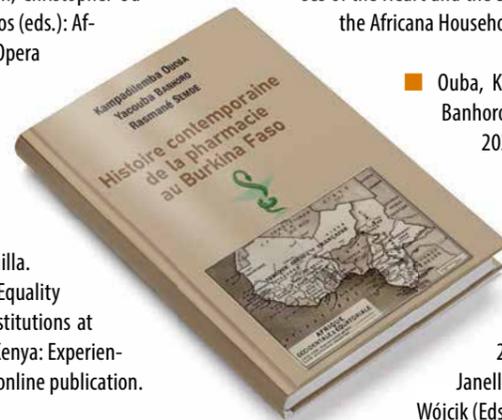
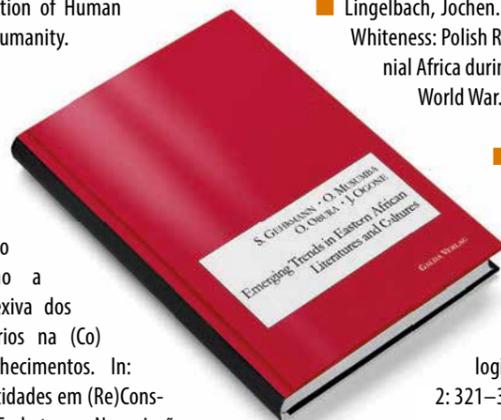
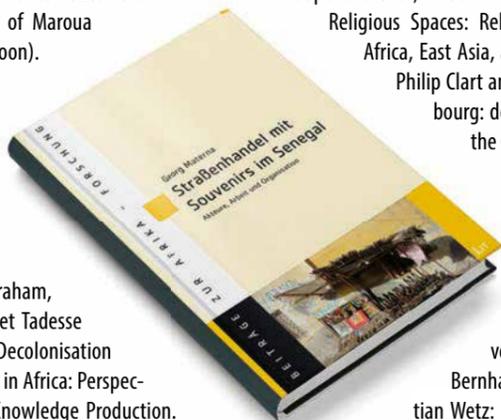
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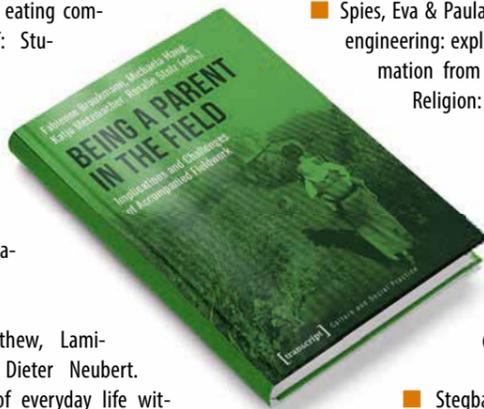
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Events and Guests

January 2020

Juliane Müller

Guest Lecture:

*Bolivianische Händler*innen und der Markt für elektronische Geräte im regionalen und globalen Kontext*

Karim-Aly Kassam

Guest Lecture:

Engendering a New Generation of Public Intellectuals



See report on page 26.

Film series:

AfriKaleidoskop



See report on page 36.

New Year Lecture:

Figuring out How to Reconfigure African Studies

Valentin Feussi, Jean-Benoît Tsofack

Guest Lecture:

Health discourses as moral communication? Linguistic case studies from Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon

Ulrich Goedeking, Juliane Ströbele-Gregor

Research Project: *Learning beyond the classroom: Coping with illiteracy in literate urban environments in Benin and Bolivia*

Stella Dadzie

GDO Intersectionality and Critical Diversity Literacy Workshop series: *Black Women Organising: Past Imperfect, Future Tense*

Valentin Feussi

Guest Lecture:

De Manessy à Humboldt: enjeux épistémologiques d'une approche expérimentelle des Public Lecture 'français' en Afrique francophone

Olusola Babatunde, Gáboor Bella, Mireille Mirjam Elisabeth de Bruijn, Jody Rachel Butterworth, Markus Coester, Adrienne Djenno, Ovyind Eide, Matthias Fuchs, Wolfgang Kraus, Michael Fred Kwet, Alex Boniface Makulilo, Peter Ochieng, Lee William Watkins, Oliver Watteler, Yunusa Zakari Ya'u

International Conference:

Frontiers in African Digital Research



See report on page 30.

Joe Spencer-Bennett

Guest Lecture:

Moral talk: debates about its forms, functions and value in political life

February 2020

B Camminga, Rejoice Chipuriro, Antje Daniel, Nelly Fais-Sad, Mario Faust-Scalisi, Tamás Jules Fuetty, Pelagia Goulimari, Annette Keilhauer, Numaira Khan, Antje Kley, Tania Mancheno, Tomuepeishe Maphosa, Jody Metcalfe, Mahan Mirab, Stephen Mutie, SN Nyeck, Rotimi Omosulu, Ramola Ramtohul, Peter Simatei, Dilan Zoe Smida, Karin Stögner, Uygur Vural, Xin Wu

Intersectionality Symposium:
Theory, Approach, Activism

See report on page 32.



Basil Bucher, James Chibueze, Davide Chiningò, Siri Lamoureux, Susann Ludwig, Samyukta Manikumar, Noluvuyo Matiwane, James Merron,

Postdoc Working Group:
SKAnning Space from Africa Seeing and Becoming

See report on page 81.



Elena Brugioni, Chinelo Jenifer Enemu, Rajcoomaree Issur, Corina Shika Kwami, Venkat Mani, Joseph Christoph Odhiambo, Michaela Ott, Justin Ouoro, Peter Simatei Tirop, Ruth Helen Simbao

Workshop:
On World and Artworks

See report on page 38.



Mbongeni Buthelezi

Workshop and Lecture:
Art meets Science: From Plastic to Microplastic

See report on page 42.



Mahaman Tidjani Alou, Abdoulaye Sounaye

Workshop:
Religious engineering: The making of moralities, development and religion in Niger

Keebet von Benda-Beckmann

Knowledge Lab:
Pluralism, Human Rights, and Corporate Social Responsibility

Christian Stegbauer

Cluster Project:
Making a living

(Ola)lekan Balogun, Billy Langa, Mahlatsi Mokgonyana, Femi Osofisan, Jane Plastow, Sandra Young

Workshop and theatre presentation of the Postdoc Working Group:
Shakespearean Past African Futurities: Entanglements of Memory, Temporalities and Knowledge(s)



See report on page 78.

Yekunoamlak Alemu, Messay Mulugeta Tefer

Workshop at ACC Moi:
Reconfiguring African Studies

March 2020

Pepetual Chiangong, Emmanuel Kengo, Sarah Marjie, Glory Essien Otung, Uche Oyali, Gratiem Atindogbe, Boniface Mbah, Stephen Mforteh, Julius Eyoh, Valentine Ubanako

Workshop of the Cluster's Research Project:
Perspectives on Colonial Letters
See report on page

See report on page 86.



April 2020

Ifeoluwa Aboluwade, Shirin Assa, Weeraya Donsomsakulkij, Maroua El Naggare, Oliver Nyambi, Tomupeishe Maphosa, Shaban Mayanya, Alena Rettova, Gilbert Shang

Lecture Series:
African Literature: Histories, Pillars and Visions

Mark Anstey, Olivier Faure, Paul Meerts, Florence Mpaayei, Oshita Oshita, Valerie Rosoux, Doudou Sidibe, Rudolf Schuessler, Mikhail Troitskiy, Eckart Woertz, William Zartman

Workshop:
Negotiating Conflict in Africa

May 2020

Susanne Mohr

Guest Lecture:
Zanzibari tourist space: Some considerations on the concept of 'grassroots'

Colloquium:
Investigating the Nexus between Animals and Basotho's identities in Epitaphs as Death Discourse

Taofik Adesanmi

Guest Lecture:
Investigating the Nexus between Animals and Basotho's Identities in Epitaphs as Death

Taofik Adesanmi

Guest Lecture:
Identities: the relational Image of a People in selected Epitaphs

June 2020

Pamila Gupta

Guest Lecture:
Relationality and the Work of Adornment in 19th-20th Century Zanzibar

Lekan Balogun

Guest Lecture for the Cluster Project:
*Travelling Knowledge and Trans*textuality. African Sources in Shakespearean Drama*

Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko

Public Lecture:
Religious Exclusivism and Logical Implication of Religious Pluralism: The Nigerian Context

Thomas Kirsch, Eureka Rosenberg

Forum:
Research Ethics

July 2020

El-Shaddai Deva, Zoey Patricia Kayendeke	MAU Online Workshop: <i>African Stories</i>	See report on page 78.
3 Women, Iyanu Adebisi, Aderemi Adegbite, Amororo Music, Efe Paul Azino, Ismail Bala, Childo, Mayram Gatawa, Alice Hasters, Morrison Jusu, Siphumeze Khundayi, Ingrid LaFleur, Peju Layiwola, Achille Mbembe, Tiffany Mugo, Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Nicksha Mwanandimayi, Zanta Nkumane, SN Nyeck, Gilbert Gabriel Omoniyi, Mr. Reed, Lulu Sala, Manape Shogole, Nuno Silas, Dilan Zoe Smida, Véronique Tadjó, Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o, Marvin Rodriguez Torres, Abeiku Arhin Tsiwah, Simon Vincent, Wonder Wonder, Wanelisa Xaba, Matchume Zango	AMC Literature Festival 2020: <i>Care, Responsibility and Solidarity: Narrating Resistance in African and African-Diasporic Arts, Academia and Activism</i>	See report on page 40.
		
Robert Declercq, Reinhard Kößler, Bernhard Moore, Christian Nekane, Tiago Saraiva, Renate Schafberg	Online Workshop: <i>Karakul Circulations</i>	
Eveline Compaore, Kayode Eesuola, Enocent Msindo, Thando Njovane, Sawadogo, Peter Simatei, Melissa Steyn	Digital Roundtable and discussion: <i>Achille Mbembe</i>	
Melissa Steyn	Critical Diversity Literacy (ICDL) Workshop: Johannesburg, South Africa	
Thokozani Kaime, Bernd Kannowski, Hassan Ndzovu	Online Workshop: <i>Coherence in Africa's Plural Legal Systems: Case Studies in Human Rights and Regional Integration</i>	
Farthia Abdi, Tatek Adebe, Jo Boyden, Chambi Chachage, Toyin Falola, Tourizou Hervé, Hannah Hoechner, Tyler Hook, Mahmoud Mamdani, Khumzi Mfecane, Francis Nyamnjoh, Dhruv Raina, Rachel Spronk, Anthony Simpson, Clarisse Tama, Timothy Williams	Workshop: <i>The Education Alibi</i>	
Abisoye Eleshin	Public Lecture: <i>Artificial Demarcations, Natural Language: Yoruba in West Africa and its Implications for Research Prospects in African Studies</i>	
Angelika Epple	Guest Lecture: <i>Calling for a Practice Turn in Global History: Practices as Drivers of Globalization/s</i>	
Ulrike Bergermann	Online Lecture: <i>Doing Property. Histories of the Kanga and Postcolonial Property</i>	
Stephen Magu	Online Lecture: <i>RECs Cooperate: Regionalism in Historical Perspective and the Prospects for a Continental Guest Lecture Federation</i>	
Richard Frimpong Oppong	Scholarly Exchange: <i>Social Responsibility and Interacting Markets in Africa</i>	

Kole Ade Odutola: Passionate online guest in spite of COVID

Kole Ade Odutola's interdisciplinary background spans three continents: Africa, Europe, and the Americas. He holds a BA degree in Botany from the University of Benin, Nigeria; an MA degree in TV/Video for Development from the University of Reading, UK; a MSc degree in Communications from Ithaca College, New York; and a PhD in Media Studies from Rutgers University, New Jersey. He is currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of Florida, Gainesville. His intellectual interest and practice cover a range of interlocking disciplines, from ecology and genetics to social sciences, media studies, and media production (radio, TV, and movie-making) and language teaching. Odutola is bringing his profound knowledge of the intersection of the Yorùbá language with traditional curative medicine and its underlying religious belief systems. His expertise in media production has helped in the creation of important audio-visual materials in this respect. Furthermore, Odutola is a renowned storyteller who has been invited to different events as a performer and as a workshop participant.



Odutola was expected in Bayreuth as a guest of the IAS in the summer term 2020. Due to the pandemic, the exchange occurred digitally. As a passionate teacher, he even participated in the Bayreuth Yorùbá course that took place during his summer vacation on Fridays from 10 am, which was 4 am in Florida! In addition to his expertise and knowledge, Odutola brought much vigour and enthusiasm to the course. Odutola is expected in Bayreuth in summer 2021.

Text: Dymitr Ibriszimow

Guests of the Institute of African Studies in Bayreuth (IAS)

Name	From	Institution	Visit
Lamine Doumbia	Germany	Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris (DHIP), France	04.11. – 19.12.2020
Salabary Doumbia	Mali	Faculté des Lettres, des Langues et des Sciences du Langage (FLSL), Bamako, Mali	02.03. – 29.06.2020
Faisal Garba	South Africa	University of Capetown, South Africa	11.01. – 26.01.2020



Working Papers – Africa Multiple connects

As the Working Paper series of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, *Africa Multiple connects* offers a forum for research conducted and presented by researchers affiliated to the Cluster e.g. guests and visiting scholars.

In the second edition of *Africa Multiple connects* John Ayotunde Bewaji published his essay *African Studies and the Question of Diasporas*.



August 2020

Nadine Siegert	Guest Lecture, Johannesburg, South Africa: Career opportunities outside of academia
Yvonne Dausab, Melina Kalfelis, Redson Kapindu, Lydia Mugambia-Ssali, Joan Nyanyuki	Online Discussion Series: <i>Everyone's human rights – A series of debates on human rights in Africa</i>
Feyi Ademola-Adeoye	Online Lecture: <i>Cultural Referencing in Selected COVID-19 online Jokes</i>
Henry Mutai	Guest Lecture, ACC Moi: <i>Prospects and Challenges of East African Common Market protocol</i>

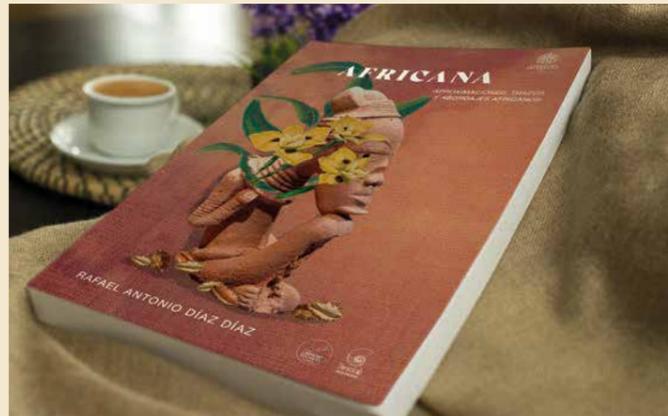
September 2020

Birgit Meyer, Omondi Robert Owino, Daniel Shayo	Scholarly Exchange: <i>Human Rights, Corporate Social Responsibility and Interacting Markets in Africa</i>
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October 2020

Boubacar Haidara, Juliane Müller	Roundtable: Learning beyond the classroom: Coping with illiteracy in literaturban environments in Benin and Bolivia
 See report on page 60.	ASA Webinar series: <i>Mapping Africa's Global Engagement by Reconfiguring African Studies</i>
Philippe Cullet, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Rosalind Malcolm, Oguge Nicholas Otienoh, Stephen TurnerB Camminga, Serawit Debele, Andrea Hollington, Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Joschka Philipps	South Online Conference: <i>Presentations of candidates for Junior Research Group Leader positions</i>
Franca Attoh	Guest Lecture: <i>ICT Aided Mobility and Migration in West Africa: Imperative for Integration</i>
	Colloquium, ACC Ougadougou, Burkina Faso: <i>Colloque sur la COVID 19</i>
Akosua Adomako Ampofo	Online Guest Lecture: <i>Exploring Young African Men Living and Performing Blackness in the Diaspora</i>
Souleymane Bachir	Online Guest Lecture: <i>Africa, African Studies & Covid 19</i>
Caroline Asimwe	Lecture: <i>Kiswahili in the East African Community Agenda for Regional Integration & Sustainable Guest Lecture Development</i>

November 2020

Rufus Akinyele, Deji Akinpelu, Adekunle Ali, Patrick Dele Cole, Sunmi Smart Cole, Erelu Abiola Dosunmu, Habeeb Sanni	Workshop series and photography exhibition at the ACC Lagos: <i>Ownership and Identities</i>
Peju Layiwola	Opening Artist Lecture: <i>Ownership and Identities Spread Out the Cloth: Exploring Yoruba Fashion and Textile Modernity</i>
Yekunoamlak Alemu	Guest Lecture Ownership and Identities: <i>Academic Mobility in Africa: Annotated Experience of South-North and South-South Academic Mobility</i>
	Summer School, Bahia Brazil: <i>Fábrica de Ideias</i>
	 See report on page 62.
Santiago Fernández, SN Nyeck, Dianne Shober	Lecture Series: <i>Intersectionality Studies and Diversity Competence</i>
Michaela Ott	Lecture Knowledge Lab
Claire Medard Amutebi	Online Guest Lecture: <i>The Case of Land Inheritance in Buganda</i>
Dianne Shober	Online Lecture: <i>Silencing the Abuser: Marriage and Death in African Women's Writi</i>
Anne Jung, Nene Morisho	Guest Lecture: <i>Learning From Ebola</i>
Ousseni Illy	Online Lecture <i>The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights: An Electoral Court?</i>
Omar Egesah, Danson Sylvester Kahyana, Patrick Oloko	Project presentation of ACC members
Shihan de Silva	Guest Lecture: <i>Performances of an Afro-Sri Lankan Community</i>
Parvati Raghuram	Guest Lecture: <i>Democratising, stretching, entangling, transversing: Four moves for reshaping migration categories</i>

December 2020

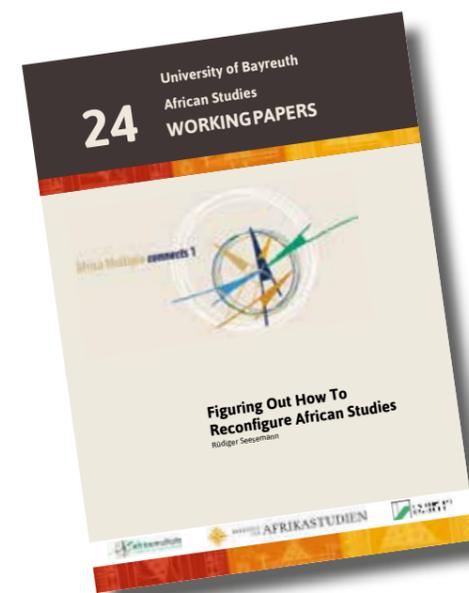
Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko	Presentation of the research project: <i>Nigeria COVID19 Alternative Treatment and the Nigeria Government</i>
Hassan Mwakimako	Guest Lecture: <i>Knowledge, Learning and Teachings from Friday Khutuba of Shaykh Al-Amin b. Ali al-Mazrui, 1890–1947</i>
Marilyn Strathern	Guest Lecture: <i>Regeneration and its hazards: A commentary on our times</i>
Miampika Moundele Landry-Wilfrid	Guest Lecture: <i>Images and representations of African migrations in contemporary francophone romance</i>
Festus Boamah, Elsie Onsongo	Conference: <i>Critical Perspectives on Energy Transitions in Africa</i>
Anthony Okeregbe	Online Lecture: <i>Beyond Syncretism to Acquiring 'Faith-skill': Exploring Religious Hybridism for Survival</i>
Yacouba Banhoro	Presentation ACC Ouagadougou: <i>Globalization and health policy in West Africa</i>
Robert Stockhammer	Guest Lecture and Discussion: <i>Welt, Erde, Globus – aus afrikanischer Perspektive?</i>
Eric Masese, Eunice Kamara	Presentation ACC Moi University Eldoret: <i>AIMWell Project</i>



The Online Publication Series

The Institute of African Studies (IAS) promotes and coordinates the multi-disciplinary field of African studies at the University of Bayreuth. It facilitates research, teaching, and training of Bayreuth-based scholars, and promotes the exchange of information between persons and institutions engaged in research and teaching in or on Africa and beyond. Moreover, it provides scholars with an opportunity to publish their work conducted in the field of African studies. Contributions from Bayreuth-based scholars as well as from guests and partner institutions are equally welcome.

IAS Online Publications are chronicled on the EPub document server at the university library. They are open access and connected to all common search engines on the internet.



University of Bayreuth African Studies Online

University of Bayreuth African Studies Online presents results of Africa-related research at the University of Bayreuth. Publication genres include articles, edited collections, and single authored monographs, including but not limited to PhD-theses.

The series is registered under ISSN 2628-1791 in the online catalogue of the university library. Submitted documents are subject to external double-blind review.*

Editor in chief is Dr. Lena Kroeker (Lena.Kroeker@uni-bayreuth.de).

University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers

University of Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers presents insights into ongoing research projects in the field of African studies at the University of Bayreuth.

In addition to the main series, there are three sub-series: Africa Multiple connects, Academy reflects and BIGSASworks!.

IAS members, scholars from the University of Bayreuth, their guests and cooperation partners are all cordially invited to submit their work to this series. Submitted documents are subject to internal peer review.

Editor in chief is Sabrina Maurus (Sabrina.Maurus@uni-bayreuth.de).

Obituary: Salabary Doumbia
23.04.1952 – 17.12.2020

Salabary Doumbia was an alumnus of the University of Bayreuth, where he received his doctorate in 1987 from the Chair of African Studies I (Faculty of Linguistics and Literature). His thesis was titled *Investigation of the Phonological Structure of Two Manding Variants* (Bambara of Bamako and Wasolonkan). Doumbia came to Bayreuth after having studied German language and literature at the National Superior College of Education (ENSUP) in Bamako, Mali, and at Saarland University in Saarbrücken. Following his doctorate, Doumbia was an adjunct lecturer of Bambara (Bamanankan). After returning to Mali, Doumbia taught at the German Department of ENSUP and the Faculty of Linguistics and Literature at the University of Bamako for over ten years before joining the Friedrich Ebert Foundation as a research associate in 1999.



Doumbia felt closely connected to the University as well as to the city of Bayreuth. He also supported activities related to the teaching of Bambara. In February and March of 2019, he organised a language course at the University of Bamako for advanced students of Bambara from Bayreuth, Berlin, and Mainz. In March 2020, Doumbia came to Bayreuth at the invitation of the IAS. During his stay, he worked on a paper about Wasolonkakan, a hitherto little-known Manding variety spoken in southwestern Mali. Another aim of his stay was to participate in a joint project on updating the teaching materials of Bambara (Bamanankan). These have since been used in language courses at the UBT Language Centre. Doumbia passed away in Bamako on December 17, 2020 after a short illness.

Text: Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn

*PhD theses submitted at the University of Bayreuth are not subjected to further review. This facilitates a fast publication process within a series of University of Bayreuth African studies.





IWALEWAHAUS



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