ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
AFRICA MULTIPLE CLUSTER OF
EXCELLENCE

**TEMPORALITIES, YOUTH
(IM)MOBILITIES AND AGENCIES:
AFRICA ON THE MOVE**

UNIVERSITY OF BAYREUTH / ONLINE

14–16
MAY
2025

Artist: Ousmane Niang

Book
of
Abstracts

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Conference Office (Information, Check-In): Room U 0.2

Central Events

C01 CONFERENCE OPENING & KEYNOTE
by Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin

The (Im)possibilities of Waiting: Precarity, Creativity & Embodied Youth Labour in Africa

Youth are often regarded as the primary agents of future-making. But what happens when they find themselves trapped in a state of precariousness—caught somewhere between mobility, waiting, and uncertainty? How do they navigate this liminal space? Where and how do they wait, and at what cost? What drives their decisions to move or wait? In what ways are these decisions impacted by gerontocratic heteropatriarchal states and a racialized capitalist global economic order? In light of these questions, this talk explores the intricate interplay between precarity, creativity and embodied youth labour. Accordingly, I highlight how African youth navigate the boundaries between work and non-work, online and physical spaces, and the relationship between the city and the body in contexts of waiting, mobility, and precarity. I argue that youth emerge as a profoundly creative force—strategizing and developing innovative ways to reshape their temporalities and envision a future where life is not only livable but also one in which they can thrive and derive joy. By exploiting the ruptures and cracks within everyday socio-spatial relations of power, youth life-making practices reveal alternative spatialities and temporalities that transcend pre-defined dichotomies and linear life trajectories. Importantly, I emphasize that these alternative spatialities and temporalities broaden our understanding of youth agency—moving us beyond mainstream understandings of resistance and revealing non-traditional responses, intentional pauses, isolated acts, and the inventive use of popular arts and media. Through these practices, African youth redefine how to create, and deliberately choose when and how to wait or move.

Moderator: Grace Musila, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)

C02 ROUNDTABLE

Transdisciplinarity and future designs – The potentials and limitations of academia/art-cooperations in dealing with challenges of the 21century

Chair: Matthias Christen, Cyrus Samimi

The participants of this panel/roundtable discuss the possibilities and limits of transdisciplinary research concerning youth and their designs for a future in the face of climate change and political shifts. Transdisciplinarity – here understood as a combination of academic and non-academic forms of knowledge production, dissemination and implementation – is often praised as bringing science into society and involving society more closely in academic research thus addressing its needs and challenges more directly. But how is this cooperation supposed to work and who takes on which role? How can aesthetic ways of knowing the world help to find research questions and generate new understandings? How can academics learn to incorporate artistic methods and collaborate with them in problem-solving? What happens then with standards of good academic practice and peer-review control mechanisms? What happens with the freedom of art to go beyond the controlling norms to create something new? And how can academics and artists take a stance and yet convey an awareness of the complexity and ambiguity of the situations on the ground?

The panelists will discuss ways to integrate art and academic work along with the question of future aspirations and expectations of youths whose lives and livelihoods are questioned by climate change and the degradation of the environment, political and social transformations, and by dissolving or increasingly exclusivist forms of belonging. With concrete examples of art/academia cooperations they will show how transdisciplinary approaches can help to understand the complexity of these processes and to develop coping strategies. A special focus lies on the challenge to address the concerns of youth and develop participatory approaches to include their future aspirations – not as problem but as a part of the problem-solving process.

Moderators:
- Joschka Philipps, University of Bayreuth (Germany)
- Cyrus Samimi, University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Panelists:
- Haoua or Azera Doga, musician (Les Soeurs Doga), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
- Andrew Esiebo, photographer (FotoFactory), Lagos (Nigeria)
- Lisa Hülsmann, University of Bayreuth (Germany)
- Gilbert Ndi Shang, University of Bayreuth (Germany)

C03 ROUNDTABLE

A GDO Keynote Conversation: African Futurist Visions in Black Feminist and Afro-Feminist Scholarship

Chair: Christine Vogt-William

This year's conference deals with the heuristic angle of Temporalities, which, among other things, considers how „*the angle of temporalities will also be key to refining our perspective on reflexivity, since relations may project themselves into the future and / or repeat or refer back to previous relations*". (See Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence Proposal, p. 20). This understanding of how time is a specifically salient factor in shaping the multiple perspectives on and relations among African lives, lifeworlds, epistemic frames and endeavours, politics and economies, is especially cogent for the critical diversity literacy (see Steyn 2015; also Ahmed, 2012) and intersectional (see Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Hill Collins, 2015; Hill Collins and Bilge, 2018, Tamale 2020) trajectories of inquiry and analysis undertaken by the GDO for the Cluster's agenda of Reconfiguring African Studies.

The envisioned Keynote Conversation is comprise of a panel of African and African diasporic women scholars of various status groups and disciplinary fields. The theoretical trajectory of African Futurism as pertinent to Black Feminist and Afro-Feminist scholarship (see Okofor 2019; McKittrick 2021) will provide a discussion frame for the conversation between continental and diasporic perspectives. Nigerian American author Nnedi Okofor (2019) defines Africanfuturism as salient in considering African relations to time, which in turn provides bridgeheads towards conceptualising relations between the continent and its diasporas:

Africanfuturism is concerned with visions of the future, […] It's less concerned with "what could have been" and more concerned with "what is and can/will be". It acknowledges, grapples with and carries "what has been".

[…] Africanfuturism is rooted in Africa and then it branches out to embrace all blacks of the Diaspora, this includes the Caribbean, South American, North American, Asia, Europe, Australia…wherever we are. It's global. Africanfuturism is not a wall, it's a bridge. (see http://nnedi.blogspot.com/2019/10/africanfuturism-defined.html)

The Keynote Conversation aims to deliver thought impulses ‚*on the future of the continent, and how it is being shaped by Africa's youth*' (Badawi, 2024: 4). The Round Table participants – from their own situated knowledges perspectives - would address the reflections intended at this conference, i.e. on how the ‚*power and agency of young people is [sic!] taking on a forceful historical processing of relations that impacts on multiple spaces*' (see Conference Call 2024).

Hence the conversation is meant to generate African futurist visions from transgenerational Black Feminist and Afro-Feminist perspectives, geared towards necessary change and hope. Such an agenda needs to be cognizant of current and longstanding challenges and constraints, impacting on how Black women scholars live, work and move in relation to higher education spaces and politics.

This Keynote Conversation is intended as a transgenerational, transdisciplinary and transcultural set of exchanges. It is not meant to provide hard-and-fast, conclusive solutions; rather it will be an unfinished conversation (see Stuart Hall), in order to open up sites of engagement to interrogate the past, the present and the future of African knowledges and knowledge production practices.

The Director of the GDO, Dr. Christine Vogt-William will be facilitating and chairing the event.

Panelists:
- Akosua Adomako Ampofo, University of Ghana (Ghana)
- Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, Queens University (Canada)
- Epifania Amoo-Adare, University of Bonn (Germany)
- Ismahan Soukeyna Diop, Université Cheikh Anto Diop, Dakar (Senegal)
- Marny Garcia Mommertz, University of Bergen (Norway)
- Rahab Njeri, University of Cologne (Germany)

C04 VERNISSAGE

From Oblivion to Memory - Transatlantic Memorial Echoes | De l'oubli à la mémoire - Échos mémoriels transatlantiques

Chairs: Ute Fendler, Thierry Boudjekeu

When/Quand:
- Opening: Thursday, 15 May 2025
- Duration: open until end of July 2025

Where/Où: Iwalewahaus, Wölfelstraße 2, 95444 Bayreuth

[ENG] Abstract

In West African countries, the slave trade is generally only present in institutionalised places of memory created for this purpose, such as the *Maison des esclaves* on Gorée Island (Senegal) or the *Door of No Return* in Ouidah (Benin). Alternatively, memory has been passed down through coded stories and songs, which exist alongside UNESCO sites and museums. These vernacular expressions of memory, deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual fabric of communities, reveal a unique depth often overshadowed by institutionalised spaces. The exhibition brings together sound and visual fragments from Togo and Benin, enabling an immersion in the memorial echoes of the transatlantic slave trade. The tree of oblivion is at the center of the exhibition space as well as the idea of transatlantic travelling fragments and echoes. The songs and stories from West Africa are accompanied by photographs and video clips from South America to link the sound echoes to an iconography of the memory of capture and enslavement.

[FR] Abstract

En Afrique de l'Ouest, la mémoire de la traite négrière trouve une expression souvent limitée à des lieux de mémoire institutionnels comme la Maison des esclaves sur l'île de Gorée (Sénégal) ou la Porte du non-retour à Ouidah (Bénin). Cependant, une transmission plus discrète, mais non moins remarquable, s'opère à travers des récits oraux et des chants codés, au-delà des sites patrimoniaux, des itinéraires touristiques et des musées. Ces formes vernaculaires de mémoire, inscrites dans le tissu culturel et cultuel des communautés, sont empreintes d'une profondeur singulière, souvent occultée par la monumentalité des lieux officiels promus par l'UNESCO. L'exposition explore les traces d'une mémoire fragmentée en assemblant des échos sonores et visuels recueillis au Togo et au Bénin. Ces fragments offrent une immersion dans les rémanences de la traite transatlantique. Les chansons et les récits s'accompagnent de photographies et de vidéos d'Amérique du Sud pour (re)construire une iconographie de la mémoire de la capture et de l'esclavage.

[ENG] Presentation

The exhibition offers a sound and visual immersion structured in several stages in a dark, enclosed space. The successive lighting of the different stages symbolizes the resurgence of fragments of a repressed memory. Through images, objects and oral accounts of the history of the slave trade, the exhibition questions the modes and mechanisms of the odious tracking down, capture and deportation of sub-Saharan Africans. The exhibition aims to shed light on aspects that are often absent from official memory, but deeply rooted in collective memory and consciousness in West Africa. *Additional space*: These experiences and memorial fragments not only break into the African present, but also find echoes in South America. Clips and texts by Colombian choreographer Lobadys Perez, as well as tales from the oral tradition of Salvador de Bahia adapted into comic strips illustrating Orixas de Bahia by Brazilian artist Hugo Canuto, engage in a dialogue with the memorial fragments evoked in the exhibition "la chambre ' noire' - in the image of the hold of slave ships and the silence imposed by oblivion.

[FR] Présentation

L'exposition propose une immersion sonore et visuelle structurée en plusieurs étapes dans un espace clos et sombre. L'éclairage successif des différentes étapes symbolise la résurgence des fragments d'une mémoire refoulée. Par des images, des objets et des récits oraux sur l'histoire de la traite, l'exposition interroge les modes et mécanismes de la traque odieuse, de la capture et de la déportation des Subsahariens. Cette exposition vise à mettre en lumière les aspects souvent absents de la mémoire officielle mais profondément ancrés dans la mémoire et la conscience collective en Afrique de l'Ouest. *Espace complémentaire* : Ces expériences et fragments mémoriels ne font pas seulement irruption dans le présent africain, mais trouvent également des échos en Amérique du Sud. Des clips et textes du chorégraphe colombien Lobadys Perez, ainsi que des récits issus de la tradition orale de Salvador de Bahia adaptées en bande dessinées illustrant des Orixas de Bahia par l'artiste brésilien, Hugo Canuto, dialoguent avec les fragments mémoriels évoqués dans l'exposition « la chambre « noire » - à l'image de la cale des navires négriers et du silence imposé par l'oubli.

Exhibition "Legacies of Biafra"

In parallel with the vernissage, the **exhibition *Legacies of Biafra*** will be on view on the first floor of Iwalewahaus, accompanied by a guided tour. Additionally, a guided tour will be offered to interested conference participants on **Wednesday, May 14 at 3 p.m.**

For further information, see the Press Release and Poster

Curator: Louisa Uchum Egbunike

C05 CONCERT

Les Soeurs Doga & DJ Marek

Haoua and Azera Doga are twin sisters form Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) who are performing since the early 2000s as the "Les Soeurs Doga". They mainly sing in their native language Mooré and address issues like terrorism, hunger among others burning issues in Burkina Faso, and turning them into a positive perspective. The Burkinabe press stated: "A strong spiritual message coupled with festive optimism". Les Soeurs Doga act in West African films and perform at music festivals in West Africa and since they met Viktor Mark in Ouagadougou they have been performing frequently in Europe.

Viktor Marek is a DJ, music producer and the CEO of the *Golden Pudel Club* in Hamburg. The club is a collectively organized location for music and art events and a communication space for different social milieus and generations. It has a clear antiracist and intersectional policy. Beside the collaboration with the Doga sisters he has a long cooperation with the Pakistani Sitar musician Ashraf Sharif Khan, but also other international musicians like Patrick Kabré. He describes his music as outworld.

Les Soeurs Doga & DJ Marek have been performing together in Europe. They created a mix of traditional music elements turned into rap-like chants with electronic elements, in which you will find their political messages.

Listen to samples of their music here

Panels
&
Roundtables

P01 Migration as Waithood:
Temporalities of Youth mobilities across African urban Centres

Chairs: Taibat Lawanson, Bisoye Eleshin

Abstract

The trajectory of youth (im)mobility in Africa has been interrogated in diverse spheres, and anecdotal evidence reveals that young Africans gravitate towards urban areas in search of better life opportunities. Migration is generally considered a rite of passage into adulthood, and this can take different forms – formal, informal, voluntary, involuntary and/or irregular. Concurrent with the African youth migration wave is the phenomenon of waithood (Honwana, 2013; Lawanson, 2019). Waithood explains a "prolonged" state of youthfulness while seeking for unrestricted opportunities and stable socioeconomic advantage, towards achieving adulthood ambitions. The panel targets discourse around how migration interfaces with waithood, while also considering diversities such as gender, ethnicity/race, education and life aspirations. In this proposal, we interrogate how youth move from rural areas to cities, across cities and transnationally, including beyond the continent. We welcome submission on issues germane to negotiating waithood, incremental migration trajectories, the "japa" syndrome, and other migration praxes that are peculiar to wayfinding and life aspirations of young Africans. Keywords: Waithood, Migration, Japa, Youth. This panel derives from the concluded research projects in Lagos African Cluster Centre namely, Youth and Informal Labour Migration across West African Urban Corridors and Growing Up in Cities, Lagos.

This panel derives from the concluded research projects in Lagos African Cluster Centre namely, *Youth and Informal Labour Migration across West African Urban Corridors* and *Growing Up in Cities, Lagos*.

Presentations

Esther Thontteh & Kennedy Eborka
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Youth Migration and Street-Level Politics in Lagos: Perceptions and Realities
Gangsterism is a key aspect of urbanization through the influx of youths who survives through their parasitic dependence on the spatial regulation of markets, streetscapes and public transportation parks in Lagos, Nigeria. The huge population of youth in Nigeria signifies a great asset for a socio- political transformation within a democratic space but when not well managed, it makes a city unsecured and compromises other sectors within the society. This article explored objectives on the migration and integration concepts of youth migrants through the following research questions: (1) Who has control of Lagos streetscapes? (2) What are the instruments of control? (3) How is power negotiated for governance of the streets? (4) Who benefits? Group Theory was adopted to understand this phenomenon. The study outcome generated vital unforeseen chain of indices that occur when migration policy is not properly conducted and institutionalized resulting in negative impacts on cities and related systems. Respondents adjudged the non-institutionalized techniques as reliable and easy to access. This study, therefore, provides some thoughts on the methods and tools utilized by the non-state actors as coping strategies towards curbing violence in the cities and recommends institutional support towards local adaptation of the strategies. This article contributes to the ongoing discourse about the increasing militarisation of public spaces, reimagining peaceful urban futures and policy interventions for enhancing public safety and security.

Keywords: Politics, Youths, Migration, non-state actors

Teniola Tonade
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

"Lost in Transnation": Prolonged Liminality and the Paradox of Agency in the African Migrant Experience
The idea of waiting features prominently in ethnographic research and theoretical reflections on the challenges of human transitioning to new (desired) categories. For instance: many youth populations in Africa have been observed to be routinely locked in a conceptual "waithood" as they seek to measure up to conventional socioeconomic markers of contemporary adult life. In reference to diasporic experiences, however, "waiting" almost inevitably transcends its function as a categorical frame, to depict an actual condition of liminality in which migrants, being neither "here" nor "there," find themselves in the in-between with no clear affiliations of citizenship or cultural consciousness. For many African migrants, this liminality is liable to be prolonged— ultimately because of the multi-dimensional lopsidedness of power in the

global order. Drawing on ethnographic findings from a variety of selected sources, as well as personal and evaluative reflections from across place and time, this paper attempts to illuminate the character (and limits) of migrants' agency in situations of prolonged liminality. First, I deploy Soyinka's concept of the Abyss of Transition as a theoretical framework for mapping the nature of spatiotemporal liminalities in general. Then I use Arendt's philosophical explorations of the reality of statelessness as a prism for understanding the basic specificities of diasporic limbo. I argue that for African migrants, prolonged liminality leads to a multifaceted paradox of agency as, due to global asymmetries of power relations, they embody and oscillate between the jarring opposites of conscious wilfulness and helpless surrender.

Keywords: Waiting; African Migrants; Liminality; Paradox of Agency; Transnation(alism)

Damilola Olalekan
University of Lagos (Nigeria), University of Melbourne (Australia)

Navigating Gendered Pathways of Migration in Lagos Urban Youthscape
Youth Migration and Street-Level Politics in Lagos: Perceptions and Realities Lagos, one of the major hub and influential cities in the West African region, remains a destination for both intranational and transnational migration. Prior experiences have revealed that migration pathways into major cities are often shaped by economic aspirations and social networks with young people navigating challenges and opportunities shaped by socio-economic expectations and inequalities, however there are gendered factors that critically influence migrants' experiences, trajectories, opportunities and vulnerabilities. This paper examines the gender dimensions of youth migration in Lagos exploring reason for migration, how they navigate the complexities of the city, labour or economic participation, social integration and adaptation.

The data was gotten from both secondary data from published literatures and primary data from interviews conducted with men and women migrants in Lagos as part of the 2021 West African Urban Corridor Project. The study highlights how gender norms shape differential access to economic opportunities and social networks, while also influencing migrants' exposure to precarity and exclusion. Also, it interrogates the constraints young women and men face in negotiating urban space and their coping mechanisms. The findings shed light on gender-specific migration challenges and contribute to broader discussion on inclusive urban policies and the need for gender-responsive migration governance in African megacities.

Oluokun Faithful Abimbola
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Migration, Waithood, and Marriage: The Shifting Roles of African Women in Long-Distance Marriages

Waithood is not a gendered experience, men and women go through this phase, however, within African communities where the woman is not equal to her spouse in a marital relationship, their experiences would defer, hence this study. This research investigates the effects of migrationinduced separation on the dynamics of romantic relationships and marriages, with particular emphasis on the experiences and agency of women who are "left behind" by their partners. This paper analyses how African women navigate life and responsibilities within their immediate families and the way they are perceived in their communities while their partners have "japa" or lives in a distant city. It will also examine the various strategies women employ to maintain their relationships, manage emotional and financial challenges, and how this circumstantial separation affects their identity and personal aspirations. By evaluating the lived experiences and stories of African women in long-distance relationships, this research would provide a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between migration, gender, and waithood in contemporary African societies.

Keywords: Women, Waithood, Marriage, Migration

P02 The Language of Youth Engagement and Generational Shifts in Governance

Chairs: Ayodele Yusuff, Ousséni Soré

Abstract

The widespread, youth-driven demands for better governance across the continent, which variously manifest as mass protests, democratic rallying and organizing for youth-sponsored candidates in election contests, and recently in militarized seizures of power in the form of coups d'e´tats, are an attestation of the power of youth agency. While studies have centred on the performative character of this agency, it is pertinent that the communicative element that drives this agency be investigated. It is for this reason that our panel explores the pivotal role of youth language in driving political disruption and fostering generational shifts in governance within Africa. By examining the linguistic practices of young people, the study seeks to highlight how language serves as a tool for political expression, mobilization, and resistance. It delves into the ways in which youth language reflects and shapes their political identities and aspirations, contributing to broader societal changes. The panel also investigates the impact of digital communication platforms and social media on youth political engagement, illustrating how these mediums amplify their voices and facilitate collective action. In this regard, our panel presents papers and discussion that deploy both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a reflective analysis of the dynamic interplay between language, youth, and political transformation in some studied African spaces.

Key words: Youth language, political expression, digital communication, political transformation

Presentations

Peter Simatei
Moi University (Kenya)

The Language of Protest Among Kenyan Youth in Music, Art, and Theatre

In Kenya, the youth have long used creative expression as a powerful tool for protest, channeling their frustrations, hopes, and demands for change through music, visual art, and theatre. This paper explores how young Kenyans employ these mediums as forms of resistance against socio-political injustices, economic struggles, and systemic oppression. Music, particularly in genres like hip-hop and spoken word poetry, serves as a sonic battleground where artists critique corruption, police brutality, and inequality. Similarly, street art and graffiti have emerged as vibrant forms of visual dissent, with anonymous artists painting murals that question governance and advocate for accountability. Theatre, especially in community and experimental spaces, dramatizes real-life struggles, engaging audiences in thought-provoking narratives that demand action and reform. This paper examines the language of protest embedded in these creative forms.

Adedoyinsola Omowunmi Eleshin
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Analysing the Dynamics of Language Use and Campaign slangs in Nigerian Political Space

Campaign is an integral part of every political engagement. Political parties engage in campaigns prior to elections, and the major goal of these campaigns is for their candidates to emerge victorious. Intentional language use and carefully crafted slangs during campaigns is one of the ways candidates employ to achieve conviction of the general public. More like it is also posting of posters and banners carrying individualised slangs. This study examines the dynamism in language use and individually developed slangs on political posters and during campaign speeches in selected Yoruba states. This will be done by analysing linguistic process employed in developing such slangs and emerging shift in usage and semantics in the society post campaign. The study will also examine language use during campaigns and reaction of the general public especially the youth to certain expressions during and after election exercise. Data for this study will be gathered by taking pictures of political posters during transient walk and listening to video and audio recordings during campaigns. The aim of this study is to interrogate shift in language use and emerging slangs during and after political campaigns, with a possible propagation by the youth population as a form of temporalities.

Oluwatoyin Olokodana-James
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Language as Artistic and Performative Media in Online Youth Political Conversations
Youth engagement in political spaces has become commonplace in many politically charged societies and regions. Beyond the culture of occupying the streets, promoting belligerence, and aggravating public anger, their participation in politics and political processes has grown significantly due to the advent of social media platforms connecting people of similar and divergent political and cultural interests. By employing creative linguistic stratagems, their voices are articulated against lousy governance; they mobilize support and position themselves as agents of mass change. Youth agencies have not only brought about paradigm shifts in how their roles and positions have been conceived, they have also initiated and instilled compelling structures that shaped the Nigerian political landscape. Against this backdrop, this study explores the interplay of language as an artistic form and language as a performative art in selected online youth political conversations. This study's objectives include (i) interrogating language as a medium for constructivist and de-constructivist youth political expression and engagement. (ii) Evaluating language as a tool for political persuasion, solidarity, and the shaping of collective consciousness. (iii) Assessing the artistic ingenuity of language and its performative essence in online youth political conversations. (iv) Highlighting the impact of their collective voices on political decisions and changes in the digital age. The study's data is gathered from various online sources including political conversations, interviews, dialogues, songs, rhetorical framings, and artistic memes circulated on different social media platforms. However, the scope of this study is limited to the Nigerian political space.

P03 (Dis-)Continuity and Transformation: African Knowledge Tradition and Contemporary Youth Enactment

Chairs: Adama Drabo, Asma Ben Hadj Hassen, Ibrahima Sene, Saïkou Oumar Sagnane

Short Abstract

This multidisciplinary panel discusses the uses of African knowledge tradition, addressing the validity of such knowledge regarding contemporary issues. Contributions feature young protagonists on the move and in contexts of political transformation.

Abstract

This panel echoes Taïwo's call on "taking African agency seriously", as many authors suggested before him. This call invites scholars to break out the logic of victimization to lay the foundations for a reflexive critique of "Africa in the time of the world". In line with this call, our panel discusses the place, uses, and validity of ancestral knowledge to address contemporary challenges, particularly concerning youth (im)mobility and agency. The panel focuses on how young African people summon and reappropriate such knowledge to apprehend the present and envision the future. Contributions will discuss how these people involved in societal transformation, whether living on the African continent or on the move, mobilize African knowledge tradition to make the issues raised by political regime change intelligible. The panel includes five presentations.

- **Saïkou Oumar Sagnane** critically examines the temporal, epistemological, and methodological implications of speaking about "knowledge tradition" instead of "traditional knowledge" in Africa. He bases his analysis on young Guinean executives' mobility in the context of the coup.

- **Ibrahima Sene**, from a literary perspective (with novels of: Sow Fall 2001; Nyantakyi 1998; Nganang 2001), explores three forms of crisis (social, identity, and urban) and their (transformative) functions. He analyses how essential knowledge systems in Africa, focusing on interdependence and resilience, reflect contemporary issues experienced and carried by young people and African states.

- **Adama Drabo** turns his linguistic gaze on the reinvention of ancestral Senankuya (joke kinship) among young Ivorian humorists. He will analyze discursive procedures such as irony, sarcasm, and other puns used as tools for social therapy and sustainable peace in the context of the socio-political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

- **Asma Ben Hadj Hassen**, drawing on an ethnographic study of Ivorian migrants in Tunis and Marseille, explores the emic and mythical concept of 'adventure' as these migrants use it to describe their migration experiences. For many young migrants, this "adventure" serves as both a rite of passage and aspiration, a journey toward success and self-fulfilment in an increasingly restricted world.

- **Patricia Ndlovu** studies violence in the minibus taxi industry in South Africa within the context of history and legacies of apartheid colonialism. Her paper posits that ritual violence perpetrated by poor young men who are recruited into the industry needs to be understood from its cosmological, cultural and spiritual logics.

Moderation: Ibrahim Seyni Mamoudou and Kingsley Celestine Jima, University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Discussant: Ibrahim Bachir Abdoulaye, University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Presentations

Saïkou Oumar Sagnane
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Applying Knowledge Tradition in Africa on Contemporary Issues: Temporal, Epistemological, and Methodological Implications
This essay critically examines the temporal, epistemological, and methodological implications of speaking about "knowledge tradition" instead of "traditional knowledge" in Africa. It first poses the temporal debate between the terms "traditional" and "tradition" regarding knowledge in Africa. Then, it emphasizes the epistemological delinking, the intellectual de/recentering, and the scholarly dialogue resulting from using knowledge traditions in Africa. Finally, it addresses the methodological implication of applying knowledge tradition in Africa to contemporary concerns. It reflects on the validity of such a method and knowledge out of any hegemonic frame, being aware of the postcolonial paradox and the highly political demand (Poyner, 2009) of reconfiguring African studies. While engaging with the decolonial agency (Moyo, 2024), the essay draws on empirical information from Guinea. Observations are based on young Guinean executives' mobility in the context of the coup since September 2021.

Ibrahima Sene
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Re-interpreting crisis: Transformative Functions from a Literary Perspective in African Societies

The concept of 'crisis' has been widely examined in African literary and political discourse, often emphasizing its disruptive effects on societies and identities (Chabal & Daloz 1999; Adebajo 2002; Bayart 2009; Hibou 2004). While existing scholarship frequently interprets crisis as a moment of rupture and instability in African literature (Bazié et al. 2011) and political thought (Mazrui 1995; Yagboyaju & Adeoye 2019), less attention has been given to its transformative potential—how crisis generates new forms of knowledge, adaptation, and resilience. This communication explores three interrelated dimensions of crisis—social, identitarian, and urban—through a literary perspective (Sow Fall 2001; Nyantakyi 1998; Nganang 2001), demonstrating how these crises act as catalysts for change rather than mere disruptions experienced by young people and African states. It argues that African knowledge systems, grounded in interdependence and adaptability, offer critical insights into contemporary challenges. Methodologically, this study employs literary and discourse analysis, drawing from postcolonial and decolonial approaches to examine crisis as a site of knowledge production and transformation.

Asma Ben Hadj Hassen
BIGSAS University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Migration as a Rite of Passage: The Quest for Success and Self-Realization among Ivorian Women

Youth migration in Africa can be categorized into various types and models, often based on the reasons that motivate it. Traditionally, factors such as conflict, underdevelopment, and poor governance have been used to explain internal and transborder migrations in Africa. However, this approach, focused on the economic paradigm, has often portrayed the African migrant in a miserable and utilitarian light. Based on a multi-site feminist ethnography conducted with young Ivorian migrant women in Abidjan, Tunis, and Marseille, this presentation focuses on the subjective experiences of these women during their migratory journey. Through an analysis of the emic concept of "adventure," it argues that their migration reflects an aspiration for success and self-fulfillment. For these women, departure becomes an act of "self-search," embodying a deep desire to discover alternative horizons and to experience unlimited mobility in an increasingly constrained world. After exploring how migration transforms the social status of migrants, and how they are represented in migration literature, this presentation highlights the various subjectivities they evoke to make sense of their migratory experiences and aspirations for a different life elsewhere. It also examines the migratory

adventure as a rite of passage that marks the transition from one status to another, emphasizing the personal and social transformations at the heart of the migration process.

Adama Drabo
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Reinventing Senankuya: Ivorian youth humorists and the discursive reappropriation of ancestral knowledge

This presentation explores how young Ivorian humorists reappropriate *Senankuya* (joking kinship), an ancestral African knowledge tradition, as a tool for social cohesion and conflict mediation. Traditionally based on playful and satirical exchanges between specific ethnic groups or lineages, *Senankuya* has long functioned as a mechanism for diffusing tensions and reinforcing solidarity. Today, in a context of recurring socio-political crises in Côte d'Ivoire, young comedians are transforming and revitalizing this practice in contemporary media spaces, particularly through digital platforms. Anchored in the pragmatics of humor and discourse analysis, this study draws on concepts such as irony (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980), dialogism (Bakhtin, 1984), and the pragmatics of laughter (Charaudeau, 2006). It explore how humor functions as a discursive strategy in this process of reappropriation.Through a qualitative approach combining discourse analysis of stand-up performances, semi-structured interviews with humorists, and ethnolinguistic observation, we analyze the rhetorical and discursive mechanisms — irony, sarcasm, wordplay — used to navigate social and political tensions. This contribution fits within the panel's broader discussion on the (dis)continuity of African knowledge traditions and youth agency. It highlights how humor serves as a site of critical engagement, where young Ivorians actively reinterpret cultural heritage to address contemporary challenges. By transforming *Senankuya* into a modern discursive practice, these comedians assert agency in shaping new narratives of peacebuilding, interethnic relations, and social resilience.

Patricia Ndlovu
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Making sense of ritual (influenced) violence in the minibus taxi industry in South Africa

The question of violence in the minibus taxi industry in South Africa is perennial. Violence in the minibus taxi industry cannot be understood in a vacuum. Rather it has to be studied within the broader South African context. South Africa is said to be one of the most violent countries in the world. This has to do with its history and legacies of apartheid colonialism. Therefore, this paper seeks to understand the emergence of minibus taxi

industry within violent colonial and apartheid histories in general and to explain the phenomenon of ritual violence in particular. The phenomenon of ritual violence has not received scholarly attention as there is overemphasis on the overt taxi wars. The paper draws on oral interviews conducted in the Gauteng province in South Africa at the beginning of 2023. The paper posits that ritual violence has its logics that needs to be understood from a cosmological, cultural and spiritual context. The vivid example include poor young men who are recruited into the industry as inkabi (assailants/hitmen) where the contract killings cannot resume without ritual cleansing and fortification.

P04 "You are the Leaders of Tomorrow": Subversion of Temporalities in Social Movements among African Youth

Chair: Daniel Ochieng Orwenjo

Abstract

The 'youth are leaders of tomorrow' is a statement with gerontocratic connotations and temporal implications denoting societies' inherent tensions with its young people, but underscoring stereotypes about African youth. According to Schwarz & Oettler (2017), 'youth are appreciated as an innovative human resource, as talented, dynamic, inspired and productive.' This acknowledges the essentialism of 'youth' as a temporal phenomenon, a time-constructed subject, acting within and against time in pursuit of agency. Yet, temporal realities of youth antagonise these socially constructed peculiar potentials. That is, youth exist in a precarious time and space, where experiences of their time, and before them, impede negotiations of progressive agenda needed in the moment and future. Besides, societies fear youth, perceiving them as dangerous, hostile, violent, vulnerable, helpless and disoriented, hence needing outside protection (Schwarz & Oettler, 2017). Constructionists theorise 'youth' as a period where age as an institution becomes an interpretive discourse that centres young people's existence in the community as a social problem, among other meanings (Devlin, 2009). Nevertheless, African youth are actively subverting temporal obstacles in their societies. We draw attention to the critical role of African youth as actors in social movements, particularly in the struggle for press freedom, the rights of sexual minorities and ecological goals, bearing in mind that temporal states and conditions reinforce and control these areas. Notably, our interpretations of 'youth' and 'time' are from a Foucauldian lens. West-Pavlov (2013) avers that time 'is riddled with issues of power and hegemony, is at stake in much political struggle.' Considering this, we propose investigating the nature and course of African youth-oriented subversion of temporal states, traditions and cultures. We posit that a meaningful understanding of African youth in activism is appraised by a temporal conceptualisation of this demographic group as a product of the past, present and future realities. We also hold that youth-engineered social movements struggle against time and are captured by countering temporal institutions, systems or traditions. Even so, African youth exist in a special epoch (their temporalities), uniquely availing themselves of the tools that intersect with the characteristically political 'space of the everyday' (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015) to unsettle, alter and subvert hegemonic or normative traditions.

Keywords: Temporalities, subversion, youth, time, social movements

Presentations

James O. Ogone
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University (Kenya), University of Mainz (Germany)

Gen-Z Protests in Kenya: Temporalities of Digital Mobilization and the Subversion of State Power
Although the Kenyan political scene is not new to protests, the anti-Finance Bill revolts witnessed in the country in June 2024 were unprecedented in several ways. In a radical departure from their previous role as mere pawns in political contests, the youth moved to the forefront of issue-based activism in the country. It is further notable that the uprising was driven by digital activities of the Generation Z born between the mid 1990s and early 2010s. The Gen Z protests were the culmination of generational tensions in a country where meaningful youth participation in decision making has been kept in abeyance since independence. The local perception of youth as future leaders is thus underpinned by linear temporalities. Being digital natives, Gen Zs leveraged technologies, such as social media and generative artificial intelligence, to mobilise support against the government's controversial economic policies. The digital fluency of the Gen Zs across various platforms, their innovative tactics, and decentralised approach were a major challenge to the repressive state authorities. This paper perceives Kenyan youth as thriving within the nexus of tensions "between future orientation, postponement, and linearity on the one hand, and present orientation, acceleration, and simultaneity on the other" (Walther & Stauber, 2024). This understanding enables the interrogation of the actions of Gen Z protesters in the digital space as aimed at disrupting the prevailing linear temporal perceptions of youth in mainstream discourse. The paper investigates how Gen Zs assert their presence in the political scene by rebranding the expression of discontent into something trendy. In the process, the digital agency of the Gen Zs will be read as attempts to supplant the normativity of their temporal alienation in pursuit of contextually blurred temporalities.

Keywords: Protests; temporalities; social media; digital space; agency

Obala Musumba
Moi University (Kenya), University of Bayreuth (Germany)

It is a Youths' World: Subverting anti Homophobic Cultures in East Africa
Homophobia has been thought of as an acceptable culture in East Africa given the outrage with which the society receive any public expression of activities by the members of LGBTQI community in the region. The micro-culture of intolerance permeates the region from Uganda's enactment of laws that outlaw activities by LGBTQI to Kenya's banning of films believed to be imbued with LGBTQI tropes to Tanzania's banishment of perceived members of LGBTQI community. This culture is also cemented by an active

anti- LGBTQI campaign driven by leaders of mainstream religious bodies such as priests, as well as political leaders and other opinion leaders in the society. The homophobic culture that is generally propagated by people belonging to the middle and old age is facing serious challenges from the youth. East African youth have adopted multifaceted approach to challenge homophobia ranging from public parade and demonstration by members of the gay community to use of art and film where misconceptions about LGBTQI are corrected or countered. In this presentation, we are going to discuss the strategies employed by the youth in subverting the culture of homophobia in East Africa. Our presentation is anchored on the basis that both homophobic culture and its subversion in East Africa are shades of temporalities in sync with dictates of time. Whereas the people who are deeply immersed in the homophobic culture are yesterday's youth, the agents of change in this kind of attitude are today's youth.

Keywords: homophobia, LGBTQI, youth, culture, temporality

Daniel O. Otieno

University of Bayreuth (Germany)

"Evergreen?": Representation of the Temporal Concerns in Youths' Struggle against the Anthropocene in Selected Contemporary African Novel

In the age of the Anthropocene, when planetary concerns arise from the direct impact of human activities on Mother Nature, contemporary African novels have been characteristically vocal in artistic representation of these ecological realities. Notably, recently published novels subvert gerontocratic perspectives on environmental concerns by relying on youthful narrative voices to represent the continent's concern about the planet's future. In doing so, they situate African youths at the centre of an ecological battle, attributing more power and control to their character, and portraying them as bearers and enactors of agency in traditionally gerontocratic societies. This literary study proposes a close-text ecocritical reading of three contemporary African novels whose protagonists are African youths: *How Beautiful We Were* (2021), *In the Company of Men* (2021) and *War Girls* (2014). In addition, the researcher reinforces ecocriticism with postcolonial and feminist theoretical arguments in analysing gender and gerontocratic (temporal) influences on the depicted power struggle in the novels, thereby critiquing the novelistic representation of African youth against the Anthropocene as complicated by the temporal realities of their time. The point is that African youths' aspiration and vision for a greener environment encounter obstacles from the realities surrounding their juniority in ages within societies that subjectively rest power at the hands of its more senior members. In conclusion, this study will demonstrate that these contemporary novels represent an African youth's ecocritical stories as complex scenarios that demand a prerequisite subversion of temporal drawbacks in the struggle against the Anthropocene.

Keywords: temporalities, subversion, gerontocratic, Anthropocene, ecocriticism

P05 After Waithood. Reflecting on near, middle and distant futures of youth in African settings

Chairs: Erdmute Alber, Christian Ungruhe

Abstract

Since Alcinda Honwana´s popularization of 'waithood' in 2013, the concept has become omnipresent in studies on youth on the African continent. It has been used to analyse the social immobilities young people are confronted with in times of an accelerating neo-liberalisation of economies and restrictive patriarchal authority. More than ten years later, we think it is time to critically reflect on the concept and its use by asking whether the term has helped to grasp youths' lifeworlds across urban and rural locations, gender, class, race and religion. Acknowledging that African youth remain widely marginalized and face social barriers of limited resources to complete (formal) educational pathways and to enter formal labour markets, we want to elaborate on how youth in diverse settings formulate, negotiate and enact strategies and practices to build their futures. Hereby, and following Guyer (2007) and Stasik et al. (2020), we find it helpful to distinguish between different futures, for which we suggest a differentiation between near, middle and distant futures. Hereby, we are specifically interested in how youth navigate aspirations, closures as well as possible opportunities in relation to these specific temporalities of futures. We are further interested in how far 'waithood' is useful beyond its dominant focus on young urban men and helps to understand the hustles and projects of so far widely neglected actors such as rural youth and young women. Finally, we welcome long-term perspectives on youths' immobilities and whether and how they are eventually turned into social mobilities such as social adulthood.

Presentations

Issa Tamou
BIGSAS University of Bayreuth (Germany)

African Youth in the Futures Making: An Analysis from the Perspective of Rural Realities in Northern Benin

African youth is constantly characterised as a waiting generation. Taken in its urban environment, many researchers have looked at it with the concept of waithood, and thematized multiple challenges to ensure the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Although this transition is marked by long periods of waiting, it does not leave indifferent these young people who are struggling to fulfil their aspirations and secure their future. Just like urban youth, rural youth aspire to a better future. An imagined future that requires constant and non-linear actions. To this end, it's clear that these young people don't wait. They are engaged in a multitude of activities, so they are always hustling to achieve their goals. Using ethnographic fieldwork based on interviews and observation of the day-to-day practices of young people in rural areas, this study analyses waithood through the prism of rural reality in northern Benin. It explores the strategies deployed by young people in constructing their futures (near, medium and distant). It also shows how these strategies enable young people to negotiate their passage to social maturity.

Keywords: Youth, future, waithood, rural, northern Benin

Christian Ungruhe
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

What comes after 'waithood'? (Out-of-)youth trajectories and temporalities among rural-urban migrants in Ghana

Over the past decade, Alcinda Honwana's popularisation of 'waithood' has shaped the discourse on youth in Africa to a large extent. Shifting away from studies that had emerged around the turn of century and that emphasised young people's agencies, possibilities and creativities in more or less challenging social, political and economic environments, the dominant trope since is characterised by youth's powerlessness, bleak presents and uncertain futures. Following 'waithood', studies have foregrounded young people's enduring social stasis in various settings and with reference to blocked pathways to social adulthood, inadequate educational and job opportunities, political oppression, economic decline and armed conflict.

Certainly, those forms of hardship exist and shall not be underestimated. However, I would argue, such observations follow a narrow perspective that emphasise practices and experiences of the 'here and now' and hereby tend to neglect youths' relations and negotiations over time (and space) that may qualify once-observed expressions of

'waithood'. A perspective that takes into account youths' simultaneous and dynamic embeddedness in various social settings, e.g. among peers and the family, across relevant localities as well as in the present and with regard to their future lives will move away from 'spotlight ethnography' and qualify waithood's one-dimensional conceptual approach.

Based on longitudinal and translocal research in northern and southern Ghana with various groups of young rural-urban migrants, I will depict how young people's struggle to overcome social stasis unfolds, is negotiated and possibly reproduced across space, between and within generations and over young people's life courses within and out of youth.

Jesper Bjarnesen
The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (Sweden)

A family affair? Young people's future-making through phatic kinship in West Africa
When generations of labour migrants create and uphold transnational connections, it is often understood to be a family affair. Pioneers send for their children, or pave the way for parents, siblings and more distant relatives, and transnational spaces are maintained through the similar aspirations and trajectories of new generations of migrants. What is less understood is how flexible notions of kinship may be in these contexts. On the basis of a long-standing ethnographic involvement with transnational mobilities between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, this paper reflects on the ways in which idioms of kinship serve as a central currency for young people in facilitating labour migration and other moves in this region. The analysis emphasises historical continuities in labour mobility between the two countries, vested in local ideals of hospitality and solidarity in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the ruptures in these social contracts through the past two decades of political and armed conflict.

The analysis thereby offers a re-positioning of the scholarship on African youth and waithood with a point of departure in the concept of social becoming and a gendered reading of African masculinities. While the notion of waithood, I argue, was an important trope in highlighting experiences of stuckedness and failed aspirations, its proliferation has sometimes clouded our understanding of youth temporalities by taking rhetorical statements about ideal of utopian futures at face value. Anchoring our analysis of future-making in the everyday practices of creating and maintaining social ties through phatic labour (cf. Elyachar 2010), I suggest, offers a more practice-oriented understanding of the myriad ways in which young people invest in social connectedness as a stepping stone towards both immediate and distant futures.

Henrietta M. Nyamnjoh
University of Cape Town (South Africa)

Waithood in Motion: Imagined futures, (im)mobilities and waiting among Cameroonian and Ethiopian migrants

This paper examines the concept of "waithood" – the prolonged period of waiting and uncertainty experienced by young people – among Cameroonian and Ethiopian migrants in Cape Town, South Africa. Drawing on research with youth in both home and host countries, I explore how waithood manifests across different stages of the migration journey, from aspiring migrants in Cameroon and Ethiopia to those already living in South Africa.

I analyse waithood through a gendered lens, highlighting the unique experiences and challenges faced by young men and women. By adopting a long-term perspective, I demonstrate that waithood is not a static state, but rather a dynamic process characterised by motion and change, and hinged on different temporalities of instant, short term and distant futures depending on migrants agency and network. I show how young migrants actively navigate and negotiate their waiting periods, shaping their experiences and adapting their strategies in pursuit of their aspirations.

This paper argues that waithood is not limited to the pre-migration phase, but extends throughout the migration journey, encompassing various forms of waiting (instant, short-term, and distant futures), and uncertainty. These experiences are shaped by factors such as imagined futures, migration networks, and the enduring power of hope. Despite its challenges, waithood can also be a period of significant productivity, fostering collective action, resilience, and strategic planning.

Ultimately, this research sheds light on the complex and dynamic nature of waithood, revealing how young migrants navigate uncertainty, maintain hope, and actively shape their futures in the face of challenging circumstances.

Keywords: waithood in motion, phases of waithood, aspiration, imagined futures, South Africa and Cameroon

P06 Times of change and emerging moralities in the making of worlds

Chairs: Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko, Eva Spies

Abstract

The panel explores the intersections of transformation, time, subjectivities and moralities. Following the basic idea of the Cluster's RSs Moralities, the panel considers ethics / morals not as discrete themes that can be isolated from political, social, religious or cultural issues, but studies them as products of social life and interaction. Instead of studying changes in ethic codes and moral rules when interested in transformations, we rather look at how emerging moralities actively shape and are shaped by societal change. We ask how moralities, time and change are brought and thought together and how different agencies involved are asserted and/or contested in these processes. Which temporalities are referred to in the moral making of change / another world (e.g. a golden past: a glorious future; a miserable present; rupture; revolution or fulfilment)? Who or what is the object and the subject of moral world makings (the individual, the community, the youth, the state, the political, the religious)? Which moral criteria, ethical lenses and affects are referred to, or emerge, and how are (their) temporalities experienced and evaluated? How do affects like hope, guilt, anger or apathy form moral judgements? The papers of the panel look at interconnections of change, subject formation and moralities, highlighting different aspects of youth and the re/making of their worlds. They show that a separation of personal and socio-political moralities is not easily possible, and that making and changing worlds is always also a form of 'doing ethics', i.e. a process of ethical engagement and negotiations. Discussant: Eunice Kamaara (Moi University)

Presentations

Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

We hear you, but we see it differently: Moralities in waiting among young Africans
This paper examines the temporalities of waiting and 'waithood' among youths in Africa with reference to freedom and choices. The focus is on the right of young people to make choices about their person, their bodies, and what they do within a certain age limit. In the global North, 16th years is a defining age, whereas, in Africa, youth freedom is determined by the length of time an individual stays under the 'roof' of his/her parents. This paper will discuss the morality behind the quest and the denial of right and freedom of youths as long as they remain under the 'roof' of their parents and what that temporal space portends for the individual.

Yacouba Banhoro
University Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Moralités et santé globale au Burkina Faso: Le Fonds mondial et ses stratégies de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA
In order to stay with the theme of this panel, which underlines how moralities are located at different levels of our worldviews and worldmaking, I would like to trace – from different periods in the history of Burkina Faso – the constant but changing patterns of moralities in health-related discourses, which are mostly directed at the youth. In doing so, I will show how scientific discourses could sometimes take over. The argument will be based on health- and disease-related studies in which moral discourses were not the primary focus, but were present and not subsequently taken into account.

Serawit Debele
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Temporalities of Discourses on Sexual Intimacy among Christian Ethiopians
In this presentation, I want to examine temporalities of sexual moralities in urban Ethiopia by zeroing in on how religious leaders' articulation of what they consider "healthy sex" evolved across time. I begin with the 1990s, a decade when the country experienced an explosion of discourses on the erotic owing to the introduction of press freedom. In paying attention to change and continuity in sexual moralities across time, I explore what the engagement with the subject of sex tells us about religious renewal.

AbdulGafar Fahm
University of Bayreuth (Germany), University of Ilorin (Nigeria)

Navigating Ethical Waithood: African Youth, Moral Conflict, and Social Transformation
The paper examines how African youth navigate and shape social transformations through ethical practices amid complex forces such as migration and socio-economic exclusion. I propose a focus on "ethical waithood" and the impact of moral conflicts between local and global values, drawing on examples such as the negotiation of digital work ethics among Nigerian gig workers and the moral dilemmas faced by Nigerian youth balancing traditional family expectations with aspirations for migration.

Isabella Villanova
University of Bayreuth (Germany), University of Vienna (Austria)

The African* Bildungsroman*: Growth, Change, and Affective Temporalities
My presentation is about the African Bildungsroman – an inherently temporal literary genre that realistically describes the moral, social, and emotional Bildung of a subject (from childhood to maturity) living in an African urban context (e.g. Harare, Johannesburg, Lagos). I use the African Bildungsroman as a critical site to engage in broader conversations about affect, temporality, and intersectionality beyond a pure literary examination. The paper discusses the growth and change of subjects living in African urban contexts and focuses on how their growth process is shaped by affective temporalities.

P07 Youth Identity(es) and Language(s) in Today's Africa: Negotiating Belonging in Sociolinguistic Spaces

Chairs: Eric A. Anchimbe, Feyi Ademola-Adeoye

Abstract

African youths in the current digitised and globalised world appropriate various sociolinguistic tools to construct identities for themselves and in codes or languages peculiar to them as a social group. Several studies on youth languages in Africa deal with urban youth language varieties, e.g. "Naija" in Nigeria (cf. Ajibade, et al., 2012), Sheng and Engsh in Kenya (cf. Meierkord 2011), Tsotsitaal in South Africa (cf. Brooks, 2014), Camfranglais in Cameroon (cf. Kouega 2003), and Nouchi in Côte d'Ivoire (cf. Newell 2009). Some of these studies address youth languages in digital communication, music, performance poetry, film, and daily interaction (cf. Boluwaduro, 2021).

This panel examines the identity(es) youths construct for themselves that signal their (un)belonging in these spaces and the language(s) they appropriate. Furthermore, attention is on the ways youths live and experience (un)belonging within African societies and their cultural and linguistic practices that are spatio-temporarily negotiated. Some more thematic leads include:

- Youth language(s), identity(es) and belonging in the *third space* (cf. Weerasuriya 2024) between cultures and languages.
- Negotiating belonging through multilingual practices, non-verbal or performative repertoires, including gaits, gestures, greetings, clothing styles, and other forms of para- lingual behaviours that are indexical of youthfulness, camaraderie, conviviality, and in-
- Cultural and linguistic hybridity revealed and reproduced in art and literature about, by and for youth.
- Youth languages and identities in digital spaces over

Presentations

Elizabeth Murrey
Moi University (Kenya)

Negotiating Youth Identity and Belonging in Globalized and Digital Sociolinguistic Spaces: Insights from Kenya
This study explores how Kenyan youth navigate their identities and sense of belonging within globalized and digital sociolinguistic spaces. With the rise of digital technologies and globalization, young Kenyans are increasingly exposed to diverse linguistic, cultural, and ideological influences that shape their self-perceptions and social interactions. Drawing on sociolinguistic theories of identity and belonging, the research examines how digital platforms facilitate multilingual practices, hybrid identities, and cross-cultural exchanges among Kenyan youth. It investigates the tensions between global influences and local traditions, highlighting how youth negotiate cultural authenticity, linguistic hybridity, and social acceptance.

The study anticipates finding that Kenyan youth exhibit hybrid identities, blending global cultural trends with local traditions, enabled by their engagement with multilingual practices, such as Sheng, and global languages like English. Digital platforms are expected to emerge as empowering spaces where youth express themselves, resist traditional norms, and redefine cultural authenticity while navigating tensions between local belonging and global integration. Additionally, the research anticipates uncovering how these sociolinguistic negotiations shape broader social dynamics, including inclusion, exclusion, and cultural sustainability. These findings aim to contribute to understanding how globalization and digitalization reshape youth identities in African contexts, offering insights into sociolinguistic diversity and social cohesion.

Bolatito Kolawole
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Caught Between Linguistic Worlds: How Nigerian English First Language Speakers Navigate Cultural Identity in the Third Space
In Tower of Babel, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) predict that by the end of the century, the number of black people, that speak English as a native tongue, or "Afro-Saxons" will outnumber the inhabitants of the British Isles. This seemingly prophetic prognosis echoes, Max Siollun (2021)'s observation that Nigeria now has more English speakers and English literate people than Britain. Nigeria's rapid linguistic transition or language shift, has not gone unnoticed. Scholars have drawn attention to the endangerment of Nigeria's indigenous languages and called for the need to engage in revitalization efforts.

Still, amidst these calls to action, very little attention has been paid to those at the very center of the language shift. Namely, the increasing number of Nigerians growing up with English as a first language, who may possess only a minimal level of competency in their indigenous language. While Adegbite (2003) contends that "A human being without competence in his/her mother tongue is deprived and dehumanised" this paper stems from the assumption that there is life after language loss. Drawing on Weerasuriya (2024)'s concept of how youth navigate identity and belonging in the third space, this paper examines how Nigerian youth negotiate their cultural identities in Nigeria absent native indigenous language proficiency. The paper proposes that the perspectives of such youth can provide valuable insights into Nigeria's post-colonial identity, growing cultural hybridity and ultimately benefit future indigenous language regeneration efforts.

Nan Lan
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Youth Identity and Mandarin Learning in Tanzania: A Case Study of Mandarin Major Students in Dar es Salaam

In the context of globalization and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Mandarin has emerged as one of the fastest-growing and most popular foreign languages in Africa, driven by increasing Sino-African economic exchanges. Tanzania, a pioneer among African countries in introducing Mandarin into its education system, officially integrated Mandarin into its national secondary school examinations in 2017. This study explores how Tanzanian youth learning Mandarin construct their identities and negotiate their belonging in a "third place" characterized by Tanzanian and Chinese cultural and linguistic hybridity, drawing on identity and poststructuralist theory in second language acquisition (Norton, 1995) and the concept of youth belonging and language in the third space (Weerasuriya,2024).

The analysis is based on survey data collected in November 2024 from 20 Mandarin majors students (Diploma and Bachelor) at the University of Dar es Salaam, mostly aged 20-23, with 1-2 years of Mandarin learning experience. The findings indicate that employment and career opportunities are the primary motivations for learning Mandarin, followed by academic ambitions and cultural interests. The participants perceive Mandarin as a language of economic opportunity and global connection, enabling them to assert agency in shaping their futures. The study further highlights the fluid identities of Tanzanian youth navigating a multilingual context where Kiswahili, English, and Mandarin converge. This linguistic and cultural negotiation reflects broader themes of globalization, economic aspiration, and transnational belonging, positioning Tanzanian youth as active agents in constructing dynamic, multi-layered identities in an interconnected world.

Eric A. Anchimbe
University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Peer advice in a Cameroonian teenage magazine and forum: Societal expectations meet youth anxieties

This paper looks at peer advice in the monthly youth magazine *100 % Jeune* in Cameroon. The advice columns entitled *Emotional Break* and *Social Corner*, deal mostly with love relationships and related issues. They are organised in a question (problem) and answer (solution) format. The question or problem part is published one volume in advance and then again together with the answer or solution in the next. They are culled from eight volumes published between 2006 and 2009. Altogether, there are 30 instances of advice exchange have been selected for analysis in this paper.

Focus in the analysis is on the strategies youths use in this peer level advice on relationship issues they are experiencing almost at the same time. The advice seekers and advice givers are in the age range of 17-25 years. I also investigate the place of sociocultural norms and expectations of youth or young adults in the society in these exchanges. Most of these exchanges rely on proverbs, metaphors, wise sayings and norms of what is a good child should be like to provide advice to the advice seekers. Sometimes, the answer or solution turn is so authoritative that it betrays the supposed peer-level relationship between the two. This could also be the result of the asymmetrical relationship that emerges between advice-seeker and advice-giver.

P08 Jeunesses africaines, crises glocales et l'avenir des sociétés | African youth, glocal crises, and the future of society

Chair: Joschka Philipps

[FR] Résumé

Le berceau de l'humanité voit naître plus de jeunes que partout ailleurs : d'ici 2030, les jeunes Africains devraient représenter 42 % de la jeunesse mondiale (Population Reference Bureau 2019:5). Mais qu'est-ce que cela signifie ? Que nous apprend le concept de jeunesse, ce « social shifter » (Durham 2004) et cet « univers fragmenté » (Mbembe 1985 : 4), au-delà de ses usages métaphoriques pour désigner les rêves et les cauchemars de la société moderne (Comaroff et Comaroff 2005 : 20) ? Dans cette table ronde, qui combine de brèves interventions, une discussion entre les chercheurs et un Q&A ouvert, nous souhaitons nous concentrer sur les jeunes dans quatre contextes sociaux, professionnels, régionaux et de genre différents, que chacun des quatre intervenants a suivis sur de longues périodes (Amougou 2021 ; Baamara 2018 ; Philipps 2024 ; Soré 2018). En fusionnant des points de vue empiriques, méthodologiques et théoriques, nous cherchons à approfondir la contingence de la jeunesse et à interroger la manière dont chacun d'entre nous, chercheurs, l'a finalement abordée. En mettant l'accent sur l'importance des questions ouvertes et de l'inclusivité dans la recherche sur la jeunesse (comme ailleurs, voir Simone 2022) - et sur l'importance de comprendre la jeunesse comme un phénomène social qui évolue constamment vers quelque chose que les modes de détection établis ne parviennent pas à appréhender - il s'agit moins d'une recherche d'une définition commune ou d'un concept consolidé (Honwana et de Boeck 2005) que d'une discussion sur ce que la jeunesse permet aux chercheurs d'analyser.

[ENG] Abstract

From the cradle of humanity emerge more young people than anywhere else—by 2030, young Africans are expected to constitute 42 percent of the world's youth (Population Reference Bureau 2019:5). But what does that mean? What does the concept of youth— this "social shifter" (Durham 2004) and "fragmented universe" (Mbembe 1985:4)—tell us beyond its metaphorical uses to designate the dreams and nightmares of modern society (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005:20)? In this roundtable, which combines short inputs, a discussion among the researchers and an open QCA, we aim at zooming in on young people in four different social, gendered, professional and regional contexts, whom each of the four speakers have followed over extended periods (Amougou 2021; Baamara

2018; Philipps 2024; Soré 2018). Fusing empirical, methodological and theoretical vantage points, we seek to delve into the contingency of youth and interrogate how each of us researchers ultimately dealt with it. Emphasizing the importance of open questions and inclusiveness in youth research (as elsewhere, see Simone 2022)—and the importance of understanding youth as a social phenomenon that constantly evolves into something that established modes of detection fail to come to terms with—this is less a search for a common definition or a consolidated concept (Honwana and de Boeck 2005) and much more a discussion on what youth enables researchers to analyze. Our working hypothesis, to be developed further in preparation to this roundtable, is an empirically grounded perspective on temporalities, in which global crises cannot be the end of a story that others have written, and from which a radically contingent future of society emerges.

[FR] Cette table ronde se déroulera en français avec des traductions ponctuelles en anglais. Les contributions des participants en anglais sont les bienvenues et seront traduites.

[ENG] This roundtable will be held in French with English translations along the way. Participants' contributions in English are welcome and will be translated.

Speakers

- Gérard Amougou, University of Yaoundé II (Cameroon)
- Layla Bamaara, CNRS Bordeaux (France)
- Joschka Philipps, University of Bayreuth (Germany)
- Zakaria Soré, University Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

P09 Affective and Intergenerational Temporalities: Rethinking the Legacies of Biafra

Chairs: Louisa Egbunike, Katharina Greven

Abstract

This roundtable explores the intersections of temporalities, positionality, and the evolving legacies of the Nigeria-Biafra war. It invites scholars and creative practitioners to reflect on the shifting dynamics of researching and representing this historical event within contemporary contexts, particularly in light of youth agencies and mobilities that shape Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

Participants will engage with themes such as the temporalities of belonging and memory, considering how the war is remembered and reinterpreted by successive generations, including its significance for youth movements and intergenerational dialogues. The roundtable also examines the ethical and methodological challenges inherent in working on deeply personal or collective histories, focusing on how emotions and positionality influence research practices and artistic representations. Central to the discussion are questions of how researchers and practitioners navigate the evolving political and cultural landscape, including renewed calls for Biafran independence. How do such movements challenge or reaffirm existing narratives? What does it mean to work on a subject that intersects with lived experiences of conflict and trauma?

Key themes include:
- **Youth and agency**: The role of young people in reconfiguring narratives about the war and its aftermath.
- **Temporalities of memory and belonging**: How memories of the war shape contemporary identities and intergenerational connections.
- **Affective temporalities**: How emotions influence the perception of time and inform the representation of the war's legacies.

This roundtable aims to foster a multidisciplinary dialogue on how the Nigeria-Biafra war continues to shape and be shaped by shifting temporalities and relational processes.

Speakers

- Louisa Egbunike, Durham University (UK)
- Hassan Aliyu, British-Nigerian artist
- Nathan Richards, University of Nottingham (UK)
- Gilbert Ndi Shang, University of Bayreuth (Germany)
- Amarachi Iheke, King's College London (UK)
- Chike Azuonye, British-Nigerian artist

Exhibition "Legacies of Biafra"

During the conference the **exhibition 'Legacies of Biafra'** will take place on the 1st floor of the Iwalewa House. Interested parties will be offered a **guided tour** on Wednesday, May 14, 3 p.m. and after the exhibition vernissage on Thursday, May 15, 7:30 p.m.

For further information, see the Press Release and Poster

P10 'Vibing' Through Time: Youth, Popular Cultures, Religion, and the Sense of Self and Agency in Africa

Chairs: Musa Ibrahim, Hassan Ndzovu

Abstract

This panel explores the dynamic interplay of popular culture, youth, and religion within African contexts, examining how contemporary cultural expressions reflect and shape the experiences and (im)mobilities of youth. As Africa undergoes rapid socio-political changes, economic transformations, and technological advancements, popular culture, intertwined with religious influences, emerges as a vital site for negotiating identity, agency, and belonging among young people. Through case studies and comparative analyses, this panel will highlight the diverse modalities of youth expression across music, film, fashion, digital media, and street art, illustrating how these cultural forms both reflect and challenge traditional religious narratives. Contributors will engage with the notion that popular culture not only mirrors the socio-religious landscape but actively participates in its reconfiguration, positioning youth as co-creators and agents who navigate the complexities of both local and global contexts. Additionally, the panel will explore how popular culture serves as a space for spiritual expression, empowerment, and social commentary, allowing youth to reinterpret their lived experiences and engage with their faith in innovative ways. By addressing how these cultural forms navigate and resist the constraints of waithood, the panel captures the frustrations and aspirations of young Africans, often caught in a prolonged state of waiting as they transition from conforming to norms into exploring their agencies. Overall, this panel brings together scholars engaged with popular culture, youth studies, religious studies, and African temporalities to foster a nuanced dialogue about the transformative potential of youth-led cultural movements and their implications for understanding contemporary African societies.

Discussant: Britta Frede, University of Bayreuth (Germany)

Presentations

El Maarouf Moulay Driss
Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez (Morocco)

Rhyming Against the Powers That Be: Pause Flow's Dialectical Critique of Governance and the Sacred

This paper examines Pause Flow's hip hop music, where religious concepts (i.e. hell, paradise, angels, religious mercantalism, khilafa, etc.) are reconfigured as instruments of radical critique against political governance and the ruling tactics of the powers that be. Rather than seeking transcendent meaning, Pause Flow weaponizes the sacred to not disrupt and expose the underlying power structures but make his critique a subject matter of public debate. The focus here is not simply on how hip-hop artists employ music, profane language, and poetry to subvert norms, but on how these transgressions challenge the very foundations of political and religious authority by subjecting the sacrosanct to the scrutiny of his fans and detractors. Pause Flow's engagement with religion becomes a strategic reappropriation, not a rejection, of the sacred, offering a dialectical rethinking of power dynamics, particularly in the Moroccan context in which we can't draw a wedge between religious authority and political authority.

Keywords: Pause Flow, Hip Hop, Political Governance, Religious Critique, Sacred, Power Dynamics, Dialectical Rethinking

Charles Prempeh
Centre for Cultural and African Studies, KNUST (Ghana)

"We will plead the cause of our ancestors": Imprecation, popular cultures and young people's political activism in Ghana

My presentation seeks to explore young people's assimilation of popular cultures and spirituality (rejuvenation of imprecatory prayers) as they broaden the frontiers of democratic governance in Ghana. Ghana's liberal democracy is celebrated across sub-Saharan Africa as a model for emulation in the region. Meanwhile, since the 1990s, when the country charted renewed pathways in liberal democracy, voter apathy remains a major concern to the political class. The situation is compounded by several young people's endorsement of military leaders who are challenging the fault lines in liberal democracy. In Ghana, however, young people have not shown explicit enthusiastic support for a military takeover of public governance. Nevertheless, since the millennial turn, they have consistently advocated a review of the 1992 constitution to cure its embedded deficits in over-concentrating power in the country's president. To achieve this political ambition, young men and women have harvested both online and offline resources for mobilisation and political activism. Even so, the political class has often deployed the security apparatuses and structures of governance, including the judiciary,

to impose immobility on them. Against this context, since the commencement of the millennium, young people have incorporated imprecation in popular cultures to implore the country's earliest nationalists and some presumably powerful deities, such as Antoa in the Asante Region of the country to invoke curses on politicians and state actors believed to be involved in different shades of malignant corruption. This means that since Michael Okyere's (popularly known as Obrafuor) hiplife debut, "Yaanom," released in 2001, invoked the spirit of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, and the ancestors to restore Ghana to glory, by punishing perceived corrupt state officials, the trend has continued henceforth. Beyond hiplife, Ghana's young people have leveraged Accra's annual popular cultural celebration, "Chale wote," to align religion, popular culture, and political activism in broadening the frontiers of participatory democracy and its expected consequential human flourishing. My paper draws on the theories of popular culture, the modern state, and secularism to explore how young people leverage popular songs and cultural festivals to foster an indigenous non-binary worldview through the ritual performance of imprecatory supplications to demand accountability and transparency in public governance. My paper ultimately will index the interface between popular cultures, spirituality, and young people's deconstruction of state-imposed limitations in public governance.

Keywords: "Chale wote," Ghana, Imprecation, Popular Culture, Politics

Ashir Tukur Inuwa
Bayero University Kano (Nigeria)

Navigating Faith and Fame: The Complexities of Agency in Kannywood Celebrities
This research explores the concept of self-determination within the context of Kannywood, the Nigerian Hausa-language film industry. This study investigates the intricate dynamics of individual agency, religious beliefs, and societal pressures within the careers and lives of two prominent Kannywood celebrities, Nafisa Abdullahi and Rahama Sadau. Both women, from cultured Hausa-Muslim families in Northern Nigeria, have achieved significant success as actresses. However, their active engagement on social media, often featuring posts that challenge traditional norms, has generated considerable controversy and backlash within their conservative community. Nafisa Abdullahi, known for her philanthropic endeavors, has faced criticism for her modern lifestyle and outspoken views on social issues. For instance, her recent comments on her personal choice to not wear a headscarf on her talk show, "The Social Spotlight," sparked significant online backlash, with many expressing disapprovals. Rahama Sadau has also faced severe consequences for her perceived transgressions against religious and cultural expectations. In 2020, her post featuring a backless dress led to threats of violence from some commentators, who claimed it indirectly led to a blasphemous statement by a non-believer. In response to the intense criticism, Sadau publicly

expressed regret and released an apology video on Twitter. By examining their experiences, the research reveals how personal choices and religious values shape their professional trajectories amidst the cultural expectations and norms of a conservative society. Through qualitative analysis, the study highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by these celebrities, offering insights into how they navigate their public personas while striving to remain true to their beliefs and values.

P11 Youth Agency and Social Change in the Politics of Contestation in Kenya: The Case of 'Ruto Must Go Protest Movement'

Chair: Paul Abiero Opondo

Abstract

Wangui Kimari, Luke Melchiorre and Jacob Rasmussen [2020] have examined how the youth in Kenya have discursively responded to the state action across time and space. They assessed "the informal spaces of youth political activity as discursive sites of investigation." The youth agency is seen as the engine of political change. The rising power and agency of young people is taking on a forceful historically disruptive trajectory against 'ancient' political dynasties based on patronage and clientilism. Through the use of social media the faceless, 'tribeless', party-less and leaderless young people are spontaneously reacting to harsh economic realities and unpopular state fiscal policies driven by a desire to change the decadent deep state politics. Since June this year, the Generation [Gen] Z has organized demonstrations in the cities in response to neo-liberal policies that have led to unbearable lives for the majority. Albeit in nuanced ways, the youth in Kenya have been since the Mau Mau anti-colonial rebellion [1952-56], engaged in the struggle for social welfare, human rights, press freedom and better future. Today, they are involved in pursuit of generational change against our politics of dynasties and ethnic mobilization [Kagwanja, 2006]. This paper seeks to investigate the role and coping mechanisms of the youth in responding to the state policies of poor governance, corruption, marginalization and politics of failed promises.

Keywords: bulge theory, revolutionary social movements' theory, youth protests in Kenyan history, neo-liberal policies, World Bank and IMF policies, Solutions to youth problems

Presentations

Paul Opondo
Moi University (Kenya)

Of Youth Agency and Political Activism in Historical Perspective: Comparing the Colonial and Post-Colonial Epochs in Kenya

In this paper we assess a more nuanced politics of youth movement against the excesses of state power. Political consciousness among Kenya began after the First World War. Former students of Maseno School formed the Young Kavirondo Association (YKA) formed in 1921 led by Jonathan Okwiri. Under the name of *Piny Owach*-the people have spoken-its main point was to lobby against Kenya becoming a colony, the *kipande* system, increase of hut tax and push for the introduction of paramount chiefdom for the Luo. Similarly in Central Kenya, the youth agency was evident in the manner that the pioneer political formations were created. By 1921 there was the Young Kikuyu Association formed in 1921. Led by Harry Thuku, it protested against land alienation by the colonial government, the *kipande* system, taxation on Africans, and poor wages and working conditions. In comparison with the modern day youth activism in Kenya, we explicate the role of the external factors such as the harsh economic realities caused by neo-liberal fiscal and punitive policies, the use of social media and erosion of accountability of state power and demands for global respect of citizens' rights as the main drivers of youth social movements. Yet the youth in Kenya-known as *anake 40*-equally played a fundamental role during the anti-colonial Mau Mau rebellion between 1952 and 1956. When Kenya gained independence in 1963 it was due to the efforts of the youth who had spearhead new political formations. The paper seeks to draw a comparative line between the colonial day youth social movements and the present-day faceless and tribeless media-driven youth politics.

Key words: Political associations, Kenyan history, historical perspectives, social and political movements

Prisca Tanui Too
Moi University (Kenya)

Historicisation of Youth Social Movements and Politics in Kenya

The history of youth social movements and politics in Kenya is deeply intertwined with the broader historical, social, and political developments in the country. From the colonial era to post-independence struggles, youth movements have been pivotal in shaping Kenya's political landscape, often acting as catalysts for change. This paper traces the evolution of youth activism, from its early roots in uprising movements to the current generation of politically engaged young people. Although studies focusing on individual youth protests abound, historical perspective tracing the trajectories of youth

social movements and politics has not been adopted. Historically, Kenyan youth have played a pivotal role in challenging political systems, particularly during periods of political repression. Through the agency approach this study using a qualitative approach of content analysis of historical texts, speeches and media examines youth protest movements in Kenya. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify key themes and patterns in youth social movements and politics. Objectives includes tracing youth movements and politics during the colonial period, youth movements during the one-party era and Gen-Z activism and use of digital mobilization. It argues that the history of youth social movements and politics in Kenya reflects their continued drive for meaningful change in the face of economic hardship and political disillusionment. The growing trend of young people leveraging technology to mobilize and demand change has meaningful change, it has destroyed existing boundaries, such as ethnicity, and inspired a new generation to engage in politics and advocate for social justice, challenging entrenched systems and pushing for reforms in areas like good governance and anti-corruption efforts.

Key words: Historicisation, Social movement, Politics, Youth Social movements, Kenya

Bramwel Matui
Moi University (Kenya)

Youth Protests in Digital space in 2024-2025: An Emergent Public Power in Political Constitutionalism in Kenya

This study examines how *Ruto Must Go* youth movement in Kenya represents a transformation in the practice of political constitutionalism through digital public power. Grounded in Participatory Culture Theory and New Institutional Theory, the study explores the nature of digital protests as a form of public power; it also examines the institutional, technological, and socio-political factors shaping its emergence; in addition, finally the study unearths the governance outcomes of this form of public power- including policy shifts, institutional responses, and shifts in political engagement. Using thematic analysis of both mainstream and social media content, the study situates the *Ruto Must Go* youth protests within a broader historical trajectory by comparing them to the post-2022 post-election protests led by opposition leader Raila Odinga. The comparison highlights continuities and changes in mobilization strategies, institutional responses, and the framing of legitimacy and public power in political constitutionalism. Additionally, the study examines power and counter-power dynamics, analyzing how state actors and political elites have adapted through repressive and accommodative strategies- including digital surveillance, legal restrictions, and co-optation efforts. Government and policy documents, alongside media reports on official responses, provide further insights into the contested nature of digital protests. The findings contribute to debates on youth agency, digital activism, and the evolving relationship

between political constitutionalism and public power in Kenya's post-2010 constitutional order. This study further enriches studies on Kenya's hybrid constitutionalism in this post-2010 Constitution where both judicial reviews and political means operate side by side in putting a constraint on the actions of government.

Keywords: youth protests, digital public power, political constitutionalism

Christopher Joseph Odhiambo
Moi University (Kenya)

Gen Z Protests in Kenya: From Streets to Digital Spaces

In recent times, Gen Z in Kenya has emerged as a powerful force in social and political activism, utilizing both physical and digital spaces to amplify their voices. This paper examines the evolving landscape of protest among Kenyan youth, focusing on how street demonstrations are increasingly intertwined with digital activism on platforms like Twitter(X), TikTok, and Instagram. By exploring the #FinanceBill2024 and #TaxJusticeKE movements, the study interrogates the motivations, strategies, and impact of Generation Z's activism. Deploying qualitative approach, including digital ethnography and content analysis of social media posts, the research engages in the criticality of the interplay between online and offline protest strategies. It also explores how digital platforms enable decentralized leadership, rapid mobilization, and the creation of counter-narratives, challenging traditional power structures and state surveillance. The findings aspires to proffer insights into how Gen Z navigates censorship, the digital space, and state repression while redefining civic engagement and political participation. This study underscores the importance of digital spaces as crucial sites of political expression and resistance, reshaping protest and democracy in Kenya and beyond. It calls on scholars, policymakers, and activists to reconsider traditional political participation frameworks in light of the dynamic and hybrid nature of contemporary protest movements led by GenZ.

Keywords: Generation Z, Kenya, Digital Activism, Social Movements, Political Participation, Social Media, Protest Dynamics

Catherine Kiprop
Moi University (Kenya)

Gendered Voices of Resistance: Young Women's Agency in Political Protests and Social Movements in Kenya

This paper examines the agency of young women in Kenya's political protests and social movements, emphasizing the gendered dimensions of youth political engagement. While youth agency in political contestation has gained scholarly attention, the specific contributions of young women remain underexplored. Grounded in feminist theory,

intersectionality, and youth agency frameworks, this paper interrogates how young women navigate gendered socio-political landscapes to assert their voices in the public sphere. It critically examines how intersecting factors such as patriarchy, digital activism, and socio-economic conditions shape young women's participation in social movements. The paper addresses the following research questions: How do young women in Kenya exercise agency in political protests and social movements? What structural and cultural barriers do young women face in these political spaces? How does digital activism influence the strategies and outcomes of young women's political engagement? In what ways can policy and practice better support the agency of young women in political contestation? By synthesizing existing literature and applying theoretical perspectives on gender, youth, and activism, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the gendered nature of political contestation in Kenya. It calls for more inclusive frameworks in research, policy, and practice to recognize and amplify the voices of young women as key actors in social and political change. The paper concludes by proposing directions for future research to further unpack the complexities of gendered youth agency in Kenya's socio-political landscape.

P12 Navigating Waithood: Temporal Entanglement and Negative Agencies among African Youths

Chairs: Peter Oni, Hellen Kilelo

Abstract

This panel focuses on the tension between being youth and becoming adult that negates the temporality of waiting and the status of waithood in African postmodern societies. In "waithood" there is a dramatic twist of time-consciousness aligning expectations and possibilities in a manner that projects young people in Africa as static social agents in a hurry. As societal structures often fail to provide adequate opportunities for education, employment, and social integration, young people are left navigating a liminal space that disrupts traditional life trajectories and are entangled in the constellation and tension of temporalities. This temporal entanglement compels them to deploy negative agencies as coping mechanisms and strategies for survival, thus expressing their potential to rewrite their own history. Our discussion will focus on the manifestations of these negative agencies, including participation in informal economies, engagement in criminal activities, and reliance on social media and digital platforms for disruptive behaviours. The panel will feature presentations that discuss how these actions are not merely deviant but are responses to systemic failures and societal pressures. By examining the underlying causes and implications from diverse, gendered and multidisciplinary perspectives, this panel aims to highlight how temporality is multiply expressed in the way African youths relate with space and time.

Presentations

Isaiah Oluwayomi Olayode
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Before Marital Vows: Navigating Societal Expectations among Southwestern Nigerian Youths in the Era of Waithood

Societies across the world setup benchmarks in form of passage rites, expected to be fulfilled by individuals to be recognized as members of a particular society. Yorùbá society in southwestern Nigeria, not in exception with various expectations that qualify every member of the society to move from one stage to another. The notable among these passage rites is societal expectations covertly designed for the youths, especially the males to scale through to qualify for marriage, and how the strive to meet these expectations has deprived average youths in southwestern Nigeria the right to marriage, leaving their female counterparts marriable in search of husbands. In view of this, this study examines how youths navigate societal expectations in Southwestern Nigeria in the Era of Waithoods. This study has three fundamental objectives. First, it examines the passage rites for Yorùbá Youths to qualify for marriage in Southwestern Nigeria. Second, to analyze how societal expectations impact Yorùbá men and women differently, especially in terms of readiness, social status and marriageability. Finally, it explores the coping mechanisms adopted by Yorùbá youths in navigating societal expectations for marriage in the face of economic hardship and social realities. To achieve these objectives, this study adopts a qualitative method of data collection involving interviews among selected youths between the ages of 18 and 40 years in major cities across southwestern Nigeria to obtain information about their lived experiences relating to contemporary societal expectations before marriage. The study concludes that the strive to meet societal expectations before marriage vows has contributed to unnecessary waithood among youths in Southwestern Nigeria, leaving marriable ladies in search of husbands, and it's Imperative to rethink this cultural norm in line with global changes in gender narratives.

Keywords: Nigeria, Marital Vows, Societal Expectations, Southwestern Youths, Waithood

Ademola Kazeem Fayemi
Australian Catholic University, Sydney (Australia)

Dysfunctional Agency and Health Inequity among Nigerian Youths: Fixing the Tension of Waithood

The youth demography constitutes a significant portion of Nigeria's estimated growing population of 220 million. While the United Nations Population Fund Country Programme approximately estimated 63% of Nigeria's population is under 25 years old in 2023, an

increasing number of such populations are victims of drug abuse and dysfunctional agencies. According to the 2021 National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) report, 40% of Nigerian youths aged 18 to 35 are approximately profoundly involved in drug abuse. There is a conceptual and scientific link between the use of substance abuse and narcotics and the disruption of agency, making it dysfunctional. Given these alarming statistics, this paper reflects on the problem of dysfunctional agency and health inequity among Nigerian youths. In contributing to the discourse on promoting health equity and positive agencies amongst African youths, this paper argues that understanding the context, effects, and temporal entanglements in waithood amongst youth is strategic to addressing factors exacerbating the health inequity gap in Nigeria. Drawing on Jennifer Ruger's health capability paradigm, this paper argues that Nigeria's capacity for meaningfully transitioning her youths to responsible older adults is fractured. The temporality of waiting into responsible older adults amongst some Nigerian youth populations tends to obey the logic of contraposition. If the social structure and associated system of enabling health capability and well-being of the youth are not facilitated, then waiting to see youth grow into responsible adults contributing to national development is not unfractured and possible. When a moral agency is dysfunctional, the temporality of waithood and becoming is disrupted, resulting in 'waitless' and 'unbecoming'. The question is, can the tension of waithood be fixed? Who are the actors, and what responsibilities and duties do they have? This paper provides some suggestions as starting points.

Keywords: Dysfunctional Agency, Health Inequity, Youth, Waithood, Waitless

Hellen Kilelo
Moi University (Kenya)

Remostrating in the Waithood? The Kenyan Gen Z in search of their "space"

In June 2024, Kenyan youth led by the Generation Z category used the social media to mobilize other young people country wide with the following hashtags: #RejectFinanceBill, #Occupystatehouse, #Rutomustgo and #OccupyParliament amongst others. The protests were sparked by the Finance bill 2024 that had been passed in Parliament, the high cost of living, unemployment, corruption, opulence being displayed by those in power amongst other factors. This led to the president rescinding on this bill and changing his cabinet. Protests were carried out throughout the country. This caused many to wonder whether the country was experiencing a Gen Z Spring. The Gen Z consist of a critical group in waithood who are not only tech-savvy but who are also using technology to protest and actively participate in the political discourse. The irony is that although over 70 percent of the Kenyan population consists of young people in waithood, the voter turnout during the 2022 elections was the lowest in the last 15 years. This study seeks to answer the following questions: What are the drivers behind the Gen

Z remonstrations in their waithood in Kenya? What are the strategies and tools used by the Gen Z for mobilization? What challenges have they been facing? The study will be based on the youth agency theory. This research will adopt a Qualitative Approach. Youths aged between 18 and 27 in different Counties in Kenya will be interviewed.

Keywords: Waithood, Gen Z, remonstration, mobilization, participation

Peter Oni
University of Lagos (Nigeria)

Reclaiming Time through Negative Agencies: Youth and the Subversion of Temporalities
Youth in African postmodern societies are affected mainly by unequal opportunities, frustration, social deprivation, inadequate socialization, meager community resources and facilities, injustice, and uncertainty. In dramatic turn of time-consciousness, youths align expectations and possibilities with redefining social temporality paradigms. As youth are in a hurry, the tension between being young and becoming adults becomes convoluted in the quest for existence, flourishing, or both. Temporality, therefore, assumes new meaning and understanding where the three moments of time fuse in a dialectical process of entanglement of grasp, retention, and pretension. Unfortunately, this postmodern trend of youth-oriented fusing of time births complex and paradoxical experiences evident in social woes and vices, including cults, gangs, crimes, fraud, and the associated get-rich-quick syndrome in most urban spaces in Africa and elsewhere. Clearly stated, young Africans are entangled in subversive images and contradictions of progress revealing existential tensions. As such, youth responses to spatio-temporal and territorial stigma depict their potential to redesign their existence. Against this background, this paper examines the trends and challenges of waithood among youth and temporality(ies) in post-modern African societies as they contour their identity(ies).

Keywords: Africa, Negative Agencies, Subversion of Temporalities, Time-Consciousness, Youth