



Swiss Society for African Studies  
Société suisse d'études africaines  
Schweizerische Gesellschaft  
für Afrikastudien

## Swiss Researching Africa Days | Journées suisses d'études africaines (Bern, 28.-29.10.2022)

### Call for papers / Appel à contributions

The Swiss Society for African Studies invites paper propositions for the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> Swiss Researching Africa Days. The objective of this biennial convention is to promote the exchange among the community of researchers working on Africa in Switzerland. Panels typically integrate young and established scholars (Master, PhDs, postdocs, professors). Please submit your proposal before **31 July 2022** directly to the convenors of the respective panel. Papers may be presented in English, French or German. We recommend that English presentations do their slides or hand-out in French and vice-versa.

*La Société suisse d'études africaines invite les acteurs de la scène africaniste en Suisse de proposer des contributions à la 7<sup>e</sup> édition des Journées suisses d'études africaines. Ces journées biennuelles visent à promouvoir l'échange entre chercheurs de tous niveaux (master, doctorats, post-docs, professeurs). Nous vous prions de soumettre vos propositions jusqu'au **31 juillet 2022** directement aux personnes responsables du panel en question. Nous suggérons que les présentations en français soient accompagnées par des projections ou documents en anglais et vice-versa.*

### Call for posters / Appel à proposition de posters

One of our aims is to present on-going or recently finished PhD research on a topic related to Africa at Swiss universities. The organizers invite researchers to submit a scientific poster (size A0, vertical orientation) on their PhD research for the Swiss Researching Africa Days. There will be time slots for the presentation of the posters during the conference. The posters will also be compiled as an electronic reader to be published on the website of the Swiss Society for African Studies. Please submit proposals for posters (pdf) to Veit Arlt ([veit.arlt@unibas.ch](mailto:veit.arlt@unibas.ch)). The deadline for submission is **14 August 2022**. The organizing committee will decide on the acceptance of submitted poster proposals and confirm by 31 August 2022.

*En outre, la SSEA souhaite dresser un inventaire des thèses de doctorat en cours dans le champ des études africaines en Suisse. Pour cela, nous invitons toutes les doctorantes et tous les doctorants ayant une thèse en cours dans une université suisse, ou ayant soutenu une thèse récemment, à préparer un poster (A0, orientation portrait) et le présenter lors des journées. Un moment sera réservé pour que les participants puissent prendre connaissance des posters et discuter avec leurs auteurs. Tous les posters seront ensuite publiés sur notre site web dans une petite brochure. Les propositions de posters (PDF) sont à envoyer par e-mail jusqu'au **14 août 2022** à Veit Arlt ([veit.arlt@unibas.ch](mailto:veit.arlt@unibas.ch)). La sélection se fera d'ici le 31 août 2022.*

For the Board of the SSAS/SGAS/SSEA: Didier Péclard, Tobias Haller and Veit Arlt

For the University of Bern: Tobias Haller

## **Panel 1: African Transitions to Peace and Democracy? Modifications and critiques of a persistent model**

### **Convenors:**

Michael Aeby, Universities of Basel, Cape Town and Edinburgh

Jamie Pring, University of Basel, Department of Political Studies

**Contact:** [michael.aeby@ed.ac.uk](mailto:michael.aeby@ed.ac.uk)

“Post-conflict transitions”, which are meant to simultaneously enable the consolidation of peace and democracy in African societies emerging from violent intrastate conflict, remain the norm in policy and practice regardless to sustained scholarly critiques of the transition model that is rooted in the liberal peace paradigm. The panel serves to present new research on different components of transition processes, which commonly entail the negotiation of peace agreements, installation of interim governments, implementation of transitional mechanisms and “post-conflict elections” that are hoped to usher in the peaceful competition over political power by democratic means. Since the end of the Cold War, an array of African countries underwent so-called “post-conflict transitions” that were, in most instances, brokered by external third-parties, including the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Whereas the AU and RECs constructed the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) to devise “African solutions to African problems”, their policies on peacemaking, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction reflect the liberation peace paradigm of the 1992 UN Agenda for Peace. The African organisations’ interventions in a range of intrastate conflicts have promoted the associated model of post-conflict transitions.

The liberal peace paradigm that underpins twin transitions to peace and democracy seeks to achieve peace by building state, economic and civil society institutions for electoral democracy, the rule of law, human rights and market economies. The underlying theory of change assumes that the transition process enables a stable political settlement, i.e., a *modus vivendi* among competing elites that is based on mutually acceptable ground rules on the distribution of power in society as the foundation for sustainable peace.

Critiques of such twin transitions highlight the conflict objectives of simultaneously promoting peace and electoral competition in a context of polarisation, volatility and poor state capacity. Critiques of liberal peacebuilding object to the overt focus on state-building and market economics that may exacerbate inequality. Since bargaining among elites commonly takes centre stage, negotiated transitions run the risk of excluding societal actors that lack coercive power and leading to the partition of political power, state resources and wealth among warmakers. As highlighted by the local turn literature, the imposition of peace plans that are devised by external actors and lack local ownership may go at the expense of local peacebuilding initiatives.

Whereas the transition model persists in policy and practice, the negotiation, design and implementation of transitional mechanisms have seen significant modifications and innovations over the past three decades, including efforts to render dialogues and implementation processes more inclusive and gender sensitive.

The panel serves to showcase new research that critically examines the premises, normative underpinnings, design, implementation and viability of different aspects of African post-conflict transitions. This includes the negotiation and mediation of settlements in different types of dialogue platforms; the terms of peace agreements and design of transition plans; the workings of transitional executive, legislative and judicial institutions; the implementation of transitional mechanisms for constitution-making, security sector transformation, economic post-conflict reconstruction and different domains of governance; truth, justice and reconciliation processes; implementation monitoring mechanisms; the holding of post-conflict elections; and various forms of third-party support to implement transition plans.



We welcome proposals for papers that take a critical look on the post-conflict transition paradigm, its normative underpinnings, or one of the above-mentioned components of transition processes in Africa. We appreciate both comparative research and case studies that examine African transitions from the perspective of different scholarly disciplines.

## **Panel 2: Under Construction: The Evolving African Peace & Security Architecture**

### **Convenors:**

Tobias Haller, Désirée Gmür, Selina Felber (Institute for Social Anthropology, University of Bern), Sonja Merten and Babatunde Owolodun (Swiss TPH) and Anne Mayor (Genetic and Evolution Department, Anthropology Unit, University of Geneva)

**Contact:** [desiree.gmuer@anthro.unibe.ch](mailto:desiree.gmuer@anthro.unibe.ch)

This panel addresses research that deals with increasing vulnerability of food systems in Africa and looks at the causes that include not only climate change but its intersection with changes in institutional conditions of local tenure systems of land and land related common-pool resources (CPRs) and its impact on food resilience and nutrition. While these systems were enabling resilience before colonial times, they were formally undermined by the change to state property and subsequent changes after Independence. This also affected the property and management rights of CPRs being food producing resources, thus building the base for many types of food and food security for local people. Will include case studies in the Senegal but also encourage research in other African countries to be presented. We are interested in the historical development and institutional changes impacting property of land and land related commons and how these impact local food systems and household nutrition as well as resilience/vulnerability thereof in the context of external effects such as agro-industrial developments, conservation and climate change. We are interested in discussing how different areas are affected differently these changes and the role of the loss of local ownership, household and labour conditions impact food resilience, discussing the argument that food vulnerability is not just an effect of climate but as well of institutional change of land tenure and social relations.

## **Panel 3: 'Expertise' in and on African cities**

### **Convenors:**

Faduma Abukar Mursal, University of Lucerne  
Jon Schubert, University of Basel

**Contact:** [abukar.faduma@gmail.com](mailto:abukar.faduma@gmail.com)

Expertise on African cities includes fields of action as diverse as security, sustainability, environment, and 'development' more broadly, which seek to shape how African cities should best develop. Such policy discourses define and frame urban problems, select and order concepts, and build narratives that shape policy action. Much of that knowledge is based on globally circulating ideals and standardized 'best-practice' that play an ambiguous role: they define normative goals for their terrains of intervention, reifying at the same time demands for particular forms of expert knowledge to justify and maintain their discursive power.

The ways cities are represented, planned and organised in and through such expert discourses have symbolic and material effects, which often stands in contrast to the expectations and everyday experiences of urban residents. These tensions can be made analytically productive, and

our panel seeks to explore these through questions such as:

- How is expert knowledge produced and disseminated along the policy-making chain, including implementation?
- How does this knowledge shape these cities? How do inhabitants adapt to, resist and subvert it?
- What is our role as experts, most of us based at Swiss/European institutions, in contributing to this system of knowledge-production on African cities?

#### **Panel 4: Multilingualism and Health Communication in sub-Saharan Africa: Transdisciplinary approaches in research and development practice**

**Convenors:**

Thomas Bearth, University of Zurich

Djouroukoro Diallo, Center for the Study of Language and Society, University of Bern

**Contact:** [djouroukoro.diallo@unibe.ch](mailto:djouroukoro.diallo@unibe.ch)

Communication plays a central role in healthcare as well as in medical practice between health practitioners, patients, policy makers, and other partners involved in this process. The involvement of all these actors at various levels also represents a linguistic and socio-cultural communication challenge (Hohenstein/Lévy-Tödter 2020). Diallo/Houssouba (2021) describe the process of inclusion and/or exclusion of sub-Saharan African languages in the Swiss medical communication media during the pandemics of AIDS and COVID-19. They conclude that in this country considered as a Sonderfall thanks to its multilingual language policy with four official languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh), this inclusion becomes necessary because of the increasing presence of sub-Saharan African languages such as Lingala, Peul, Swahili, Tigrinya, Somali, Amharic, etc. in the Swiss linguistic landscape. Moreover, they argue that the language policy in Switzerland in relation to African languages is similar to the language policy of several African countries such as Cameroon or Ethiopia, where the concept of extensive trilingualism (Gfeller 1997) is widely practiced. Furthermore, Batchelor/Yoda/Ouattara et al. (2019: 01) assume that “many lower- and middle-income countries (MLICs) have high levels of linguistic diversity, meaning that health information and care is not available in the languages spoken by the majority of the population.” Considering this linguistic imbalance, our panel tackles the issue of multilingual medical communication in sub-Saharan Africa and discusses some transdisciplinary perspectives in research and development practice. It mainly focusses on the following questions:

- Who are the actors involved in the medical communication sub-Saharan African context? What is their role in this process?
- Considering the reality of multilingualism and the imbalance between national, local and official languages such as French or English in sub-Saharan African, what languages are mainly used in medical communication? And why?
- What is the modus operandi of this communication in the health care governance? Specifically, what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of this communication?
- What could be transdisciplinary approaches for research and development practice for a better multilingual medical communication in sub-Saharan Africa?

## **Panel 5: Decolonizing Swiss-Africa research collaborations**

### **Convenors:**

Fabian Käser, Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE), Swiss Academy of Sciences

Ravaka Andriamihaja, Center for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern

Anja Bretzler, Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE), Swiss Academy of Sciences

**Contact:** [fabian.kaeser@scnat.ch](mailto:fabian.kaeser@scnat.ch)

Research and education addressing global crises, such as the recent pandemics or global inequalities, require international collaboration that includes institutions from Switzerland and African countries. However, colonial legacies within research and education manifested in power relations, epistemology, methodology and curricula still influence the strategic direction and implementation of research projects and collaborations. A growing community of researchers is critically reflecting on ways and perspectives to “decolonize” research collaborations.

During this panel we would like to discuss how education and Swiss research collaborations and partnerships with African countries are influenced by colonial legacies. How do these affect knowledge production, the representation of different partners’ interests and values, the perception of global and local problems and scientific contributions to the development of solutions? We would like to creatively reflect on ways to overcome colonial legacies within research, education and society in order to decolonize research collaborations and partnerships.

We are looking forward to contributions reaching from examples of colonial legacies within research and education to conditions and practical ideas for decolonizing Swiss research collaborations. With this panel, we would also like to sensitize researchers and scientists to the existence of colonial legacies and to connect different scholars from Switzerland and African countries interested in this issue.

## **Panel 6: La transcription : enjeux de la mise à l’écrit de textes oraux africains**

### **Organisatrices :**

Anaïs Stampfli, Université de Lausanne

Jehanne Denogent, Université de Lausanne

**Contact :** [anaïs.stampfli@unil.ch](mailto:anaïs.stampfli@unil.ch)

Dans ce panel, nous proposons de réfléchir au geste de transcription de récits oraux africains, en situations coloniales et postcoloniales. De même que la traduction (Cassin 2004, Diagne 2022), la mise à l’écrit de textes oraux implique une série de choix qui en transforment le sens. Ce phénomène de transcréation, selon le terme proposé par Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère pour décrire les traductions intermédiatiques (2016), dénote d’enjeux pluriels - identitaires, politiques, scientifiques ou littéraires – témoignant des transitions culturelles au cours du xxe siècle. En effet, la transcription du « folklore » africain est d’abord mise en œuvre par les missionnaires et les ethnographes à des fins scientifiques et d’évangélisation (Van den Avenne 2017). Alors que l’histoire des spoliations des œuvres d’art africaines fait aujourd’hui l’objet d’une large réflexion critique (Sarr et Savoy 2018), il est nécessaire de considérer la circulation des textes oraux africains. Mais la transcription joue un rôle important aussi pour les écrivain·e·s africain·e·s

dans un processus d'affirmation et de réappropriation d'un corpus. Elle représente un phénomène caractéristique des périodes de bouleversements culturels et de construction identitaire (Assmann 1983, Thiesse 2001), et, à ce titre, nécessite d'être interrogée selon différents angles - anthropologique, juridique, linguistique ou littéraire – à partir du contexte africain.

Les questions soulevées peuvent être déclinées suivant plusieurs axes :

- Dans le cadre des sciences juridiques, la transcription pose la question de la propriété. Contrairement aux œuvres d'art, dont la présence dans les musées européens implique l'absence du contexte d'origine, le statut des textes est plus ambigu. Leur circulation n'implique pas une appropriation. Toutefois, ils évoluent entre des conceptions différentes de l'auteur et, par conséquent, du droit d'auteur. Il s'agira ici de penser ces déplacements d'un point de vue juridique.
- La mise à l'écrit de traditions orales est une des tâches de l'anthropologue, qui constitue un des agents de ce passage transmédiatique. L'anthropologue est confronté à des questionnements autant pratiques – comment transcrire des récits oraux tout en restant fidèle au contenu et au contexte ? – qu'éthiques – quelle place occupe le transcripteur vis-à-vis de l'informateur ? – qui sont au cœur de nos réflexions.
- En linguistique, la transcription implique de réfléchir aux formes spécifiques de l'oral et de l'écrit pour considérer les passages de l'un à l'autre. Comment rendre les formes propres à l'oral par une graphie ? Dans la mesure où la transcription n'implique pas seulement une perte, quelles créations sont produites ou peuvent être inventées lors de ces passages et quels sont leurs effets ?
- La mise à l'écrit de textes oraux concerne aussi les études littéraires. Comment et pourquoi la littérature écrite se saisit de textes oraux africains transcrits ? Si elle ne participe pas à leur transcription à proprement dit, elle œuvre à un changement de statut – de la source anthropologique au fait littéraire ; de l'oral à l'écrit – selon une logique du parrainage. Quels sont les effets et les enjeux d'une telle hybridation dans le fait littéraire ?

## **Panel 7: Transdisciplinary research in Africa focusing on One Health**

### **Convenors:**

Kristina Pelikan, Kathrin Heitz-Tokpa, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel, University of Basel & Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire; Jakob Zinsstag, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel & University of Basel

**Contact:** [kristina.pelikan@swisstph.ch](mailto:kristina.pelikan@swisstph.ch)

Transdisciplinarity could be defined as the integration of academic researchers from different disciplines with non-academic participants in co-creating new knowledge and theory to achieve a common goal (Swiss Academies of arts and sciences, OECD 2020). Including communities, practitioners and other stakeholders into the research process is in vogue. However, the successful and ethical conduct of what at least in an African context is generally a multilingual, inter- and transcultural collaboration with different hierarchies and inequalities involved is not a given and should be analysed more intensively. For example, (neglected) multilingualism is directly related to ethical issues and hierarchies. The use of a lingua franca should be discussed and language competencies of collaborators taken into consideration at different scales of a project. An uneven communication set-up may have an influence on the collaboration and the project as a whole. Furthermore, differences in worldview, expertise and discursive positioning as experts must also be reflected and taken into account in order not to repeat structural pitfalls in an attempt to



decolonise relationships in transdisciplinary projects.

This panel invites contributions from the field of One Health (human and veterinary medicine, environmental sciences, agriculture, humanities and social sciences), it invites to critically reflect on past and ongoing transdisciplinary projects as well as to share experiences of individual approaches to working ethically and successfully in an African context.

## **Panel 8: Decolonization of museum collections**

### **Convenors:**

Larissa Tiki Mbassi, University of Geneva

Samuel Bachmann, University of Basel

**Contact:** [larissa.tikimbassi@gmail.com](mailto:larissa.tikimbassi@gmail.com)

Emmanuel Macron's speech in Ouagadougou revived issues already present in the claims of African activists and scholars since political independence (Savoy, 2021). The promises of restitution made by the French president, and then the birth of the Sarr-Savoy report and the media effects that followed, along with the increased visibility of black lives matters movements, have had remarkable influences on cultural policies in European countries. In Switzerland, even though the Swiss government has maintained that it has never participated in the slave and colonial enterprise (David & al. 2018), the future of African heritage has nonetheless been publicly addressed. Indeed, since 2017, so-called colonial property entered the realm of parliamentary demands and was discussed in several motions. In parallel to the Swiss political debate, cultural actors, including various associations and museums, who are questioning how they can “decolonize” their collections, and their narratives are undertaking provenance research, in order to determine when and under what conditions so-called colonial goods arrive in their collections (Savoy, 2017; Brizon, 2021). The initiatives of these institutions are now circumscribed by guidelines that aim to standardize the practices of provenance research in a colonial context (German Museum Association, 2018; Swiss Museum Association, in press). Yet, it is clear that the working strategies that frame this research focus mostly on the institutional trajectory of the object, neglecting “what happens” before these cultural goods appear in European collections (Tiki Mbassi, in press).

In this panel, we wish to discuss the needs and characteristics of a provenance research related to the African context, while creating a platform for exchange in order to take note of what has been done so far in Switzerland. We thus invite the participants (artist, activist, independent researcher or academic) to explore one or more of the following questions:

- How can we clarify the social, political, military, commercial, and interpersonal contexts that have encouraged the departure of cultural objects from their places of manufacture in African territories?
- In what ways can provenance research help to document the multiple roles played by African actors in the departure of their cultural heritage? Then, how can we throw light on these roles when the identity and voices of African actors are absent or presented in stereotypical ways in the archives?
- Finally, how can we value objects that are disconnected from their place of origin, and from their invisible and nameless producers? And moreover, what could be their potential futures?

## **Panel 9: Another way of seeing: fiction and faction from and on Africa**

### **Convenors:**

Natalie Tarr, Swiss TPH and Center for African Studies, University of Basel

Giovanni Casagrande, Swiss TPH

Christine Le Quellec Cottier, University of Lausanne

Isabelle Chariatte, University of Basel

**Contact:** [natalie.tarr@swisstph.ch](mailto:natalie.tarr@swisstph.ch)

When we conduct fieldwork and research in our many study sites across the African continent, we are prepared. We read scholarly publications, we speak with colleagues, we inform ourselves about the place, the people, the culture, and the environment. We are scholars. Once we are there at our study sites, we are fully concentrated and honed-in to our topic. In this panel we want to propose an expansion of our way of seeing, in the sense that Till Förster has discussed in his publications (e.g. Förster 2001), and even more so as a polyphonic or polyvisual addition to established or endorsed ways of seeing. An anthropological gaze beyond the usual(ly scholarly). We want to talk about the marriage of fiction and scientific literature for scientific research.

Literature or fiction are too often used as a mirror, showing us how we are experiencing/living our daily lives. This interaction permits us to see another reality, a reality that certainly makes sense and which perhaps allows us to see life “as it is” (Blundo & Olivier de Sardan 2006, referring to the functioning of the state). Fiction constructs multiple perspectives and dimensions on a topic or situation through a variety of narratives, sensibilities, and images. It thus questions reality in its complexity by taking into consideration other sensibilities than those usually adopted by scientific narratives. A hypothesis could be that through the reading of fiction the scientific methodological framework can be inspired and enlarged by questioning usual patterns of thinking.

We invite you to discuss and question the interaction between fiction and scientific literature, also referred to as faction (fiction + fact), with us. Since fiction is made up of multiple logics, it teaches us to think beyond the monological, in polylogical ways – fiction is an experiment of life and life in an experimental state (Ette 2012).

We welcome presentations on the following questions and beyond:

- What can fiction do to enhance our gaze and how?
- Faction: is the effect revealed by an intentionality or by its reception?
- Why and how is the language of writing important?
- Why is fiction not a mirror of our reality? What is at stake in questioning the interaction between the possible world and the real world?

## **Round Table:   Nouvelles recherches sur l’histoire contemporaine de l’Afrique : coopérations et circulations transimpériales**

### **Convenor:**

Claire Nicolas, Université de Lausanne

### **Participant.e.s :**

Claire Nicolas (Fonds National Suisse), Damiano Matasci (Université de Genève), Anton Tarradellas (Université de Genève), Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo (Université de Coimbra). La présence de Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo est encore sous réserve de confirmation.

**Contact:** [claire.nicolas@unil.ch](mailto:claire.nicolas@unil.ch)

La [Revue d’Histoire Contemporaine de l’Afrique](#), fondée à Genève en 2020, vint de faire paraître un numéro double consacré aux « Coopérations et circulations transimpériales en Afrique (fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle – années 1960) ».

Ce double numéro explore les circulations et les coopérations qui se sont déployées entre et par-delà les empires coloniaux de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle aux années 1960. En plaçant l’étude des mobilités au cœur de la réflexion, il vise plus précisément à alimenter un projet de décentrement de l’histoire de l’Afrique. Fondées sur des études de cas variées et embrassant l’ensemble du continent, les contributions dévoilent des circuits coloniaux encore peu connus ainsi que les dynamiques de collaboration et de compétition entre une vaste gamme d’acteurs internationaux, impériaux, coloniaux et africains. Elles mettent aussi en lumière les connexions avec d’autres régions du monde et amènent des perspectives originales pour comprendre les complexes transactions qui accompagnent l’accès aux indépendances. Pris dans leur ensemble, les articles montrent finalement le potentiel heuristique de l’histoire transimpériale et ouvrent la voie à de nouvelles recherches.

La table ronde propose de revenir sur le numéro en présence des deux coordinateurs. Par ailleurs, la revue proposant des entretiens en parallèle de chaque numéro, la table ronde sera l’occasion de mettre en avant des parcours de vie mobile, grâce à Anton Tarradellas. Ce sera l’occasion de discuter de l’opportunité de nouveaux formats de publications scientifique.