

# African Studies Centre

2017 Newsletter



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# African Studies Newsletter 2017

## Director's Report

This year for the first time in the history of the African Studies programme at Oxford the majority of the student cohort was either African or of African descent. We regard this as a milestone for a number of reasons. The first is that the composition of the cohort substantially fashions the pedagogical experience. It goes without saying that a university degree is shaped not just by the curriculum but by who is around the table when it is discussed and what sort of experiences and sensibilities are brought to bear upon it. We believe that the high proportion of African students in our programme sets it apart. It has taken a lot of hard work, primarily in the form convincing donors that investing in getting Africans to study their continent abroad is worthwhile. And it certainly is. We are heartened to think that students who experience our programme return to Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon and other countries with new ideas and new ways of thinking about themselves and the world. Our alumni are dispersed across universities, government bureaucracies, businesses, and NGOs; among them are filmmakers, artists, journalists and scholars. We are gratified to know that they consider their time with us to be among the experiences that formed them.

The range of dissertations this year's cohort produced is as broad as ever. The Kirk Green Prize for the best overall performance went to Yotam Gidron who wrote his dissertation on the involvement of the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, in the production of propaganda for Anya-Nya, the southern Sudanese guerrilla movement, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Ranger Prize for best dissertation was awarded jointly to Hanna Amanuel for her ethnographic work on Eritrean women refugees in Khartoum, and to Joanna Nayler for her dissertation on the politics of dam construction in Uganda. The African Studies Prize went to James Burton whose dissertation examined how a World Bank project in Lagos might better allocate grants to start-up firms. African Studies staff were as productive as ever. Miles Lamer published *The Katangese Gendarmes and the War in Central Africa*, with co-author Erik Kennes. Miles also continues work on his ESRC-funded project 'Comparing the Copperbelt', a major comparative study of mining in central Africa. A collection that I co-edited, *Police in Africa: the street-level view*, was also published this year. It showcases some of the fruit of the newfound discovery among scholars of African

bureaucracies as subjects of ethnographic research. The stage adaption of my book, *A Man of Good Hope*, which examines the politics of refugees and xenophobia, performed in New York and soon begins a world tour. Andrea Purdekova continued work on the politics of anti-terrorism in East Africa. Thomas Hendriks, after several years of ethnographic work in Kinshasa's night-time economy, is writing a book on sexuality in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thomas has also co-edited a collection called *Readings in Sexuality from Africa* which is soon to be published. David Pratten is tracing the histories of masquerade gangs in the Niger Delta – work he started with the transition to democracy in 1999 – for a book he is writing on 'everyday insecurities' in Nigeria. He is also involved in a collaborative project on the cultural history of oil in Nigeria.

The end of the academic year is sadly a time of departures. Andrea Purdekova, who has been at African Studies for five years, takes up an appointment as Associate Professor in the Politics of Security at the University of Bath. Sebatatso Manoeli, the first graduate of our MSc programme to be recruited onto our staff, has returned to South Africa to do post-doctoral work.

There are also three exciting new arrivals. Miles Tendi takes over from Nic Cheeseman as Associate Professor of African Politics. Miles is currently writing a book on the relationship between the Zimbabwean military and politics. Kathi Oke joins us as Departmental Lecturer in African History. Kathi is writing on Yoruba-language newspaper editors in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Nigeria.

We are thrilled and delighted that Professor Wale Adebawu has just joined us as Rhodes Professor of Race Relations, finally replacing William Beinart who retired two years ago. Holding doctorates in both Political Science and Anthropology, Wale is the perfect role model for the interdisciplinary ethos we hope to inspire. One of West Africa's foremost scholars, Wale's research ranges from youth to religion to nationalism to political corruption. He also takes over as director of African Studies Centre in the 2017–18 year. Finally, heartfelt thanks to the team of administrators who have kept the ship afloat over the last year. Millie Oates, our assistant administrator, has been brilliant beyond any telling. And Jordan Hankinson and Sinead Adams have done a wonderful job in the absence of Anniella Hutchinson, who has been on maternity leave. Among many other jobs well done, Sinead produced this newsletter. Many thanks!

**Jonny Steinberg**  
Director, African Studies Centre





# Academic Visitors to the ASC during 2016–17

**Chris Low**, an anthropologist who has written extensively on Koisian healing and cosmology is giving expert advice to the construction of a Koisian museum outside Cape Town. He is also involved in returning an archive of photographs collected over the years by anthropologists to their rightful owners.



**Deborah Posel** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Cape Town and fonder of the Institute for the Study of Humanities in Africa (Huma). While at Oxford she worked and presented on her forthcoming book which revisits aspects of twentieth century South African history by way of a history of consumerism, one which defamiliarises apartheid as, in part, a consumerist project.

**Michael O'Leary** trained in both economics and an anthropology with an extensive career as a consultant and a scholar, Michael is spending his time at the African Studies Centre writing a book based data he collected when he worked between 1981–1984 as the social anthropologist/ human ecologist in a large team of water, range, and livestock ecologists, all members of the Integrated Project in Arid Lands (IPAL), Man and the Biosphere, UNESCO, located in Marsabit District, Kenya.



**Tiziana Morosetti** has for the last two years taught a course in African Literature to African Studies MSc students. She is deputy-director for the journal *Quaderni del '900*, and membership secretary of the African Theatre Association (AfTA).

**Jason Mosley** has been a Research Associate of the African Studies Centre since 2012. He is also the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* and an Associate Fellow of the Africa Programme at Chatham House. His main geographical interests are in the greater Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and Nigeria. He is interested in the politics of ethnicity, and of religion – particularly of Islam – in these and other areas.



**Thula Simpson** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Pretoria and visited as an Oppenheimer Fellow. Prof. Simpson presented a paper on his recently published book, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle*.

**Shireen Hassim** is Professor of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and visited us as an Oppenheimer Fellow. Prof. Hassim presented several papers during her stay on the state of universities in South Africa, on law and intimacy and on the rape trial of South African President Jacob Zuma.



**Wolde Tadesse**, an expert on agrarian studies in the Horn of Africa, is working on several projects including collaboration on the social and cultural history of the Enset crop.



**Yash Tandon**, an honorary professor at both Warwick and Middlesex University is an African economist currently working on a book provisionally titled *A Brief History of Asymmetrical Wars*.



# Anthropological Perspectives

David Pratten

The performances of young men's masquerades on the streets in Port Harcourt and Calabar were once so boisterous and violent that 'masquerade hooliganism' was introduced as a criminal offence. Before the Nigerian Civil War, these cities in the south-east had large Igbo populations and at Christmas time they performed the masquerade dances from their rural homes. One of these Igbo plays was especially popular – agaba, which means lion – and it continued to be performed at carnivals and festivals as well as informally on the streets. And like masks elsewhere in West Africa, such as the Odelay plays in Freetown, agaba was adapted and adopted by local communities in contexts far removed from its origin. New names for neighborhood troupes were inspired by the popular movies of the 1970s like '007'. Splits within the groups led to a series of gang battles, and I was told wonderful stories about clashes that involved releasing swarms of bees to attack rival groups.



*Agaba, Independence Day, 1 October 2010, Port Harcourt*

Over time agaba straddled criminal economies and costumed carnivals – agaba groups paraded at officially sanctioned events for cultural festivals whilst also controlling the drugs trade and fixing local elections. They became masquerade gangs – masquerades, with modes of initiation, disguise, and performance, but also gangs, linked to political, criminal and militant networks across the region. In the early 2000s in Port Harcourt the agaba neighbourhood groups became templates for and supplied many of the members for new street gangs, linked both to the cult groups operating on the university campuses and to the militant groups that led the insurgency against the state and the oil companies in the Niger Delta. Like the rivalries between the Bloods and the Crips in Los Angeles these affiliations today have divided the city's poorer neighbourhoods along gang-lines.

While they were grafted onto the format of 'traditional' plays, the agaba groups became hubs for cultural innovation. New musical styles emerged along with a rich song repertoire that captured the 'rugged life' of young men searching for jobs, patrons, girlfriends and security. Borrowing from the highlife of Rex Lawson from the 1960s, prison yard labour songs, and



*Diseye Tantua*

from the palm-wine drinkers' student societies, the groups popularized, and sometimes commercialized, a musical genre known as 'gyration'.

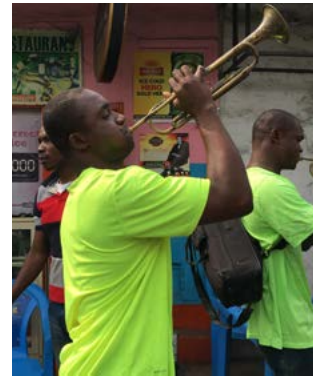
Singing mainly in pidgin, agaba's witty gyrations lament the predicaments of love and loss, of hustling and police harassment, and of violence and vulnerability that confront contemporary Nigerian youth. Indeed, Agaba seems perfectly to encompass so many of the contradictions that young people in Nigeria navigate – bridging local and global cultural repertoires in the celebration and critique of the iniquities and insecurities of everyday life.

With support from a British Academy/Leverhulme Research Grant, I have been tracing the histories of these masquerade gangs in the Niger Delta – work that I started with the transition to democracy in 1999. These stories, along with accounts from village politics and youth-led vigilante groups, form part of a monograph on 'everyday insecurities' in Nigeria, or what cult members call their 'Rugged Life'. This research on street

culture and masquerade politics has led me to develop a new research agenda this year. In collaboration with colleagues at the University of Port Harcourt, and grounded in the emerging 'energy humanities', I am now working on a project called 'The Arts of Oil: a cultural history of Port Harcourt'. Through the music, literature, comedy, art and film produced in Port Harcourt the research will explore how popular arts celebrate and critique the oil economy, and how they inflect enchantment and disenchantment with the petro-state.



*Dase Denzen West Burial, Buguma, 29 July*



*Brass section preparing for a burial, Area United, 25 Feb 2017, Main Town, Port Harcourt*



*Divine Amabroku with Agaba mask, 1974*





## South Sudanese Rebel Diplomacy

Sebatatso Manoeli, an alum of the MSc in African Studies (2012/13), has had a productive first year as a Departmental Lecturer at the African Studies Centre and the History Faculty. She has presented her academic research on Southern Sudanese rebel diplomacy at several conferences this year, including the "Understanding Insurgencies" and "The Ethnographic Archives: History, Anthropology and the Sudan Archive Durham" conferences. She also gave a guest lecture on the current civil war in South Sudan at the African Politics Lab at Pomona College. Some of the highlights outside the classroom include running a workshop on multiculturalism and leadership for South Sudanese and Ugandan graduate students from a refugee background through Windle Trust International. Sebatatso also hosted the BBC's Zeinab Badawi to discuss the journalist's new documentary series on ancient African history. At the African Union Summit in January 2017, Sebatatso gave two public addresses on gender mainstreaming. During the year, she was invited to give a Black History Month lecture for the Pembroke History Society. She was also invited to speak at the Oxford African and Caribbean Society (ACS) event on Black Women in Industry, and a panel on women and policy in Africa at the Blavatnik School of Government Africa Forum in collaboration with Oxford Women In Politics (OxWiP). She has also chaired a number of panels for The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) and the Oxford Character Project.

### Sebatatso Manoeli



Black History Month Lecture, Pembroke College



Giving an African Studies Seminar Lecture



Hosting Zeinab Badawi



The Understanding Insurgencies Conference



## Life History of a Guerilla Politician

Miles Tendi's most recent research focuses on the life history of the Zimbabwean liberation guerrilla-politician Solomon Mujuru. Mujuru received military and political training in Communist China, Russia, Bulgaria and, latterly, Pakistan. As an exiled leading commander in Zimbabwe's ZANU PF liberation army from 1971 to 1980, he interacted with a range of key African liberation struggle actors from Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa, in the process impacting on regional liberation politics and warfare in important ways. As African liberation fighters like Mujuru travelled and challenged colonialism from outside their countries of origin, their politics became transnational. They engaged with colonial politics through diffuse linkages that crossed national borders. The goal of Tendi's book is to understand these transnational linkages. Besides, Mujuru's life history provides revelatory insight into the power behind Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Mujuru was the power behind Mugabe for long periods before his assassination in 2011. The book showcases original interviews with Mujuru and senior military, intelligence and political elites who, for the first time reveal: the inner workings of Mugabe's rule and Mujuru's centrality; Mujuru's pivotal role in Mugabe's rise to power; and the nature of and reasons for Mujuru's 2011 assassination. The completion of Tendi's book was enabled by a Morland Foundation Writing Fellowship (2017). Tendi's book will be published by Cambridge University Press.

Tendi's broader interests include:

- Intellectuals, Society and the State
- Civil-Military Relations.
- Gender and Politics.
- The Existence and Uses of 'Evil' in Politics.
- Intelligence Studies.
- Biographical Research.
- Southern African Politics (Botswana, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Swaziland, especially).

Miles Tendi



# Comparing the Copperbelts work in progress...

Miles Larmer

2016–17 was the first year of Miles Larmer's project 'Comparing the Copperbelt', funded by the European Research Council. The project will produce the first integrated social history of central Africa's bordering copper mining regions in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo from the 1950s to the 1990s. It explores how knowledge about this region was produced by academics, political actors and Copperbelt communities themselves, and critically explores the relationship between this knowledge of a region commonly characterised as quintessentially 'urban' and 'modern' and a social history that challenges that characterisation.

The project has now hired three post-doctoral researchers leading on different aspects of the investigation. Stephanie **Lämmert**, who started in October 2016, explores the cultural history of the copperbelt region, focusing on how European missionaries, African church leaders and congregations developed new forms of spiritual practice to express their understanding of Copperbelt society. Stephanie carried out research in Zambia in early 2017 and, as part of the African Studies seminar series, organised a successful workshop on Urban Spirituality in May 2017. Iva **Peša**, Research Associate in Environmental History since January 2017, is exploring the attitudes of Copperbelt actors to minerals, land, people and the relationship between them: in doing so she aims to apply the approaches of environmental history to this region. **Peša's** work, drawing on initial archival research in Brussels and (in summer 2017) Zambia, also focuses on the crucial economic activity of urban agriculture, carried out mostly by women and generally ignored by official actors and by academics because it didn't fit their idea of a 'modern' economy. **Benoît** Henriët, Research Associate on the History of Haut Katanga, joined the project in July 2017 and will specialise in the Congolese side of the copperbelts story, with Larmer leading on the Zambia-based research and coordinating the overall project, which will run until June 2020.



Uppsala workshop, Dec 2016

The project's approach and early findings have already been disseminated at events including a workshop on 'Comparing Africa's Copperbelt' held at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala in December 2016 (see photo of participants) and at the European Conference for African Studies in Basel in June 2017. A first article reporting project findings was published by Miles Larmer in the journal *Labour History* in March 2017 and is available Open Access at: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0023656X.2017.1298712](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0023656X.2017.1298712)

Many more project activities are planned for the coming year, including a major workshop to be held in Lusaka in July 2018. More information on this developing area of research can be found on the project website: <http://copperbelt.history.ox.ac.uk/>. If you would like to join the project's discussion forum, send an email to [copperbelt-research-network-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk](mailto:copperbelt-research-network-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk)



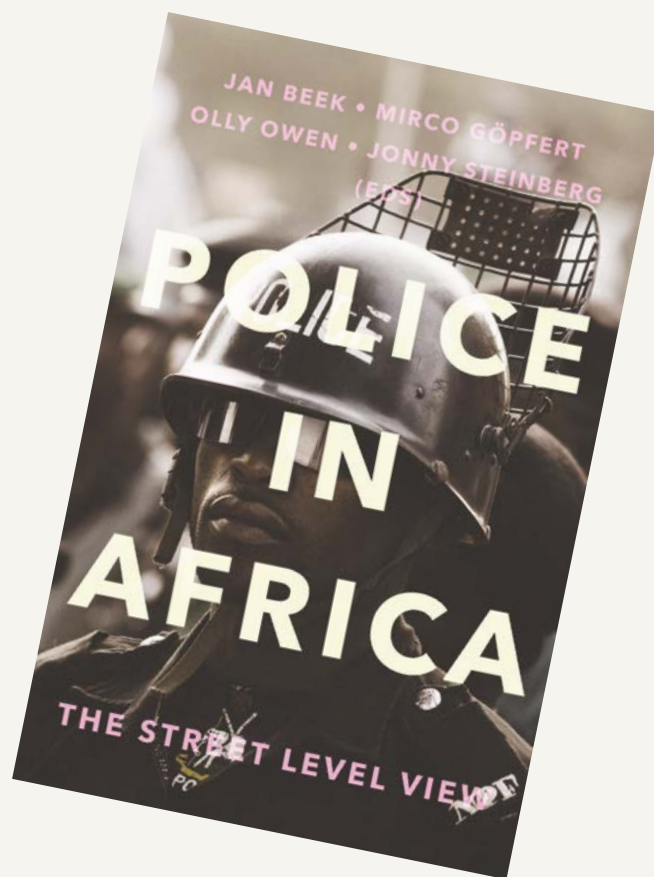
Thomas started his first year as Departmental Lecturer in African Anthropology at the African Studies Centre and the School for Anthropology and Museum Ethnography. He convened the Core Course on "Methodology, Ethics and Research Strategies" for our MSc students in Michaelmas Term, as well as our weekly African Studies Seminar in Hilary Term. He also gave guest lectures on sexuality, fieldwork and queer anthropology in other courses and accompanied MSc, MPhil and DPhil students in Social Anthropology and African Studies as supervisor and/or tutor.

Alongside his teaching, Thomas continued his long-term research on gender and sexuality in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Drawing on the intensive fieldwork he did as postdoctoral researcher at the KU Leuven University (Belgium), he has been writing up his ethnographic data on queer masculinities and sexual dissidence in urban DRC. For instance, Thomas presented a paper on "Queer Provocations, Nightlife and Popular Culture in Kinshasa" for our African Studies Seminar. A revised version of this paper will soon be published in the *Journal of African Cultural Studies* as "Queer(ing) Popular Culture: Homo-erotic Provocations from Kinshasa".

Together with Prof Peter Geschiere (University of Amsterdam), Thomas also organized a panel on "Power and Transgression: Queering Notions of Sexuality and Dissidence" at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association in Washington DC (1–3 December 2016), where he presented a paper on "Queering the Occult: Witchcraft, Kinship and Erotic Dissidence in urban Congo". And, together with Rachel Spronk (University of Amsterdam), Peter and Thomas organized a three-day symposium in Amsterdam (20–22 March 2017) on "Dissident Desires Africa/Asia: Critical Comparative Analyses on Gender and Sexuality". Moreover, Rachel and Thomas are also finalizing a new reader on sexuality studies in Africa, which will appear as *Readings in Sexuality from Africa* for the International African Institute with Indiana University Press.

Thomas Hendriks





# Police in Africa

Jonny Steinberg

This summer, a book that I co-edited, *Police in Africa: the street-level view*, was published by Hurst and by Oxford University Press. The other co-editors are Jan Beek from the University of Frankfurt, Mirco Göpfert from the University of Konstanz, and Olly Owen who works here at Oxford in the Department of International Development.

The origins of this project lie in a mutual discovery among the four of us that we were all working separately on something similar: ground-level, ethnographic accounts of police organisations in Africa; that such work had not been done on the African continent until very recently; and that several other Africanist scholars around the world were beginning to do something similar. We raised money and invited all the relevant scholars we could think of to a workshop. The result is *Police in Africa*.

Why has the study of formal police organisations come so late and why does it matter that it has begun at all? From way back, scholarship on Africa has been inclined to pay attention to the *absence* of public bureaucracies. Colonial rule was famously conducted on the cheap, Africans governed indirectly through reconstituted indigenous authorities. State theory was thus about the modern states Africans did not have.

There was a long interlude – the late colonial and early post-colonial periods were characterised by serious projects

of state-led development – but it is common cause that these projects were stymied by Africa's debt crisis in the early 1980s. Since then, scholarship has been pre-occupied with how African economies and politics function in the context of diminished formal institutions.

It often happens, of course, that scholarly fashions and preoccupations blind us to important trends in the real world. A long history of declinist scholarship did not have the tools, for instance, to account for the fact that post-genocide Rwanda fast became one of the world's most intricately policed societies; or that the longevity of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front government, formed in 1991, is explained in part by the way in which the country is policed; or, more prosaically, that when citizens of provincial Nigerian cities are involved in intractable disputes or are victims of robbery they very often take the trouble to pay a visit to the nearest police station.

*Police in Africa* emerges from a growing awareness, cultivated separately in pockets dispersed through the academy, that police organisations matter a great deal. It is perhaps also one instance in a broader rediscovery of the vital place of formal public institutions in everyday African life.

The chapters collectively extend across much of the continent, from Nigeria to Sierra Leone, Togo, Mozambique,

the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana to South Africa. The nascent field is policing studies in Africa is on full display in this volume. This new wealth of empirical material ought to provide the foundations for a new phase of comparative scholarship, which will hopefully be the subject of a future volume.





# Oxford Africa Annual Lecture:

## Dying to forget: History, memory and the intergenerational transfer of trauma in South Africa.

Stanley Malindi, class of 2016–17

What is the role of the black historian in contemporary South Africa? In his African Studies Annual Lecture, Prof Jacob Dlamini, Associate Professor of History at Princeton University and author of the books, *Askari* and *Native Nostalgia*, argued that the black historian must 'question stories that have been told, are being told, and will be told'. In mid-October 2015, a student led protest movement in South Africa calling for free, decolonized, higher education captured public imagination. In his lecture, Prof Dlamini posed the question what do these student protest movements (also known as the fallist movement) mean for the black historian? What moral imperative, disciplinary demands, and responsibilities do calls by the fallist movement to decolonize the university curriculum and the production of knowledge pose for the black historian?

There are many ways in which the trauma of apartheid's legacy deeply impacts the lives of those that may have never lived through the period. One practical example, related to the struggles of student protest movements, is the way in which young, black, previously disadvantaged black South Africans are made to claim and 'wear poverty on their sleeves' when



Annual Lecture 2017

they have to apply for the national student funding loan scheme. How does the black historian write about these traumas whilst at the same time trying to engage in/with a decolonial epistemic struggle? Prof Dlamini, engaging with the work of Achille Mbembe on the decolonial epistemic struggle, highlighted the difficulty of this exercise when, as Mbembe argued, firstly we do not know what a true decolonized knowledge looks like, and secondly, we do not have a theory of knowledge to

underpin the decolonial induction. This, Prof Dlamini humbly acknowledged, is what he struggles with. This is the challenge of the black historian.

Prof Dlamini has also undertaken the task of investigating how ordinary South Africans remember histories of violence and how their memories of this violence are shared across generations. A trauma that Prof Dlamini knows is the 1990s civil war in which approximately 240 people died in the townships of Katlehong and Thokoza, east of Johannesburg where Prof Dlamini grew up. Prof Dlamini confessed that he was not sure whether he was able or willing to write a history of the violence he knew as a youth, in part because he knows the names, faces and personal histories of so many of those who committed violence.

The lecture may have ended with more questions than answers, but it threw down the gauntlet to aspiring young black South African academics to add to the creation of the process of a decolonized knowledge production and to also play an active role in giving critical historical perspectives to contemporary struggles. I certainly felt personally challenged and inspired by Prof Dlamini's provocation.



Professor Jacob Dlamini



# The Nation as Grand Narrative: The Nigerian Press and the Politics of Meaning

Wale Adebani



Wale Adebani's book, *The Nation as Grand Narrative: The Nigerian Press and the Politics of Meaning* (University of Rochester Press) was published in 2016.

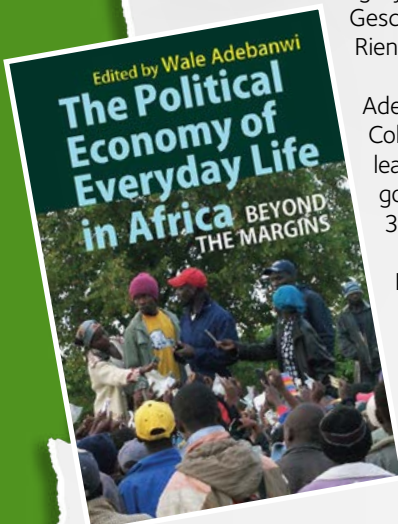
In a review of the book in *African Journalism Studies*, Emma Hunter states that "Adebani builds on an emerging body of work which takes seriously the fact that the language of 'nationhood' is frequently used in relation to communities smaller than the nation-state. At the same time, he engages with but also departs from Benedict Anderson's work on the intimately linked histories of nationalism and print culture."

*The Nation as Grand Narrative* is part of Adebani's two decades plus project devoted to understanding and analysing the role of the press in nationalist and ethnic politics as well as the articulation, in the newspaper press, of the Enlightenment project and modernity in Africa from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present time. He is presently working on Africans' intellectual responses to colonial modernity in the context of the spread of Enlightenment ideals in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa. His chapter that focuses on the theme of colonial modernity, "Colonial Modernity and Tradition: Herbert Macaulay, the Newspaper Press and the (Re)Production of Engaged Publics in Colonial Lagos," was published in 2016 in Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (University of Michigan Press).

Also his edited volume, *The Political Economy of Everyday Life in Africa: Beyond the Margins*, was released by James Currey publishers in June 2017. The book is a multidisciplinary examination of the role of ordinary African people as agents in the generation and distribution of well-being in modern Africa. The contributors include four generations of Africanist scholars in North America, Europe and Africa including Jean and John Comaroff, Jane Guyer, Fred Cooper, Adigun Agbaje, David Pratten, Anne-Maria Makhulu, Gbemisola Animasawun, Peter Geschiere, Tristan Oestermann, Max Bolt, Sara Berry, Michael Watts, Elisha Rienne, Celestin Monga and Souleymane Bachir Diagne.

Adebani's article on comparative social thought, 'Africa's Two Publics: Colonialism and Governmentality,' which relates the thought of Africa's leading political sociologist, Peter Ekeh, to Michel Foucault's idea of governmentality was recently published in *Theory, Culture & Society* (Vol 34, Issue 4, 2017).

Recently, Adebani started a new research project on Racialisation and Toponymy focussing on street (re)naming in post-apartheid South Africa. As part of this project, he recently published a chapter entitled "Colouring "Rainbow" Streets: The Struggle for Toponymic Multiracialism in Urban Post-Apartheid South Africa," in Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, Maoz Azaryahu (eds.) *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place* (Routledge 2017).



## The Oxford Africa Conference 2017

**“Breaking the Frameworks: Redefining Africa’s geopolitical, economic and cultural influence today”**

**Francois-Xavier Ada Affana**

The Oxford Africa Conference is an annual student-led event organised by the Oxford University Africa Society that brings together leading political, business and cultural figures to explore the most critical issues concerning the continent. The theme for the 2017 #OxAfrica conference, “Breaking the Frameworks – Redefining Africa’s geopolitical, economic and cultural influence today” sought to provide a platform to define leadership, entrepreneurship and overall success on African terms.

African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka opened the conference with a keynote. The rest of the day was filled with inspiring parallel sessions on a wide range of topics including global health, the representation of Africa in the arts, regional and global politics, civic engagement, education and environmental politics. Some of the conference’s distinguished speakers included Gareth Ackerman, Chairman of Pick n Pay Stores, Dr. Yene Assegid, Abiola Oke, CEO and Publisher of OkayAfrica, Joseph Hundah, Ethel Cofie, CEO and Founder of EDEL Technology Consulting, Simukai Chigugu, Lecturer at Oxford’s Department of International Development, Ishmael Dadoo, Regional Strategic Oversight Advisor to the Office of the Assistant Secretary General/Regional Director for UNDP Africa, Sissi Johnson, MBA Professor and Brand Strategist and Professor Kevin Marsh, Senior Advisor at the African Academy of Sciences.

The Innovation Fair sponsored by Higherlife Foundation also took place during the conference day, giving ten African entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their innovations to an audience of potential funders. The £2,000 cash prize was won by Afya Tea, a Cameroon-based start-up which makes fortifying teas from Moringa leaves in Cameroon.

The conference was closed with keynotes from Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, President of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and Graça Machel, who stressed the importance of young African leaders thinking and growing as a collective in an increasingly individualistic world.

The Oxford Africa Conference 2017 was an exciting event and a space to reflect on Africa’s position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The continent is at a critical juncture: socio-political and economic events in the world over the last decade have prompted the need to reassess continent-wide as well as country-specific economic, political and development models. These global shifts have exposed the weaknesses of the world system and encouraged Africans to leverage the opportunities the 21<sup>st</sup> century offers. The conference thus served as a platform to explore these ideas, but more importantly, to connect future African leaders across borders and generations as we strive to move the centre.

## The Oxford Central Africa Forum’s (OCAF) Year

**Barnaby Dye**

OCAF experienced another strong year, with hard work particularly from Jakob Hensing, Myfanwy James and Michaela Collard to raise the finance and organise the events for an ambitious programme across the three terms.

The year kicked off with the launch of Harry Verhoeven and Philip Roessler’s exciting new book on ‘Africa’s Great War’ in the Congo, *Why Comrades Go to War*, held in conjunction with the African History and Politics Seminar. It proved to be a great start to the year attracting a big crowd to hear about a book that looks set to become one of the key texts on the war. The year proceeded with a range of academic speakers from Oxford and around the UK, including Jonathan Fisher, Ade Browne and Hazel Gray. With our generous support this year, we were also able to add speakers from the US, Christopher Conte, and Belgium, Judith Verweijen and the Netherlands, Jan-Bart Gewald. Such events are important, expanding academic networks and the ensuring engagement with somewhat separated international academic communities.

The high point of OCAF’s year was the two-day event organised for Trinity Term. The “Symposium on African Politics and Ideology: Is high Modernism Returning?” was a great success, welcoming over forty speakers and guests from California, Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands, as well as from around the UK.

Discussion began with a panel looking at big dam projects in the high modernist era followed by a panel on dam infrastructure in a contemporary resurgence era. Other panels examined architecture, political economy and elite strategies, industrial and agricultural policy. The focus was on African countries, in particular Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola, Ghana and Mozambique, but a further panel looked at high modernism from a global perspective with case studies from India, Brazil, China and the Gulf States.

The recurring theme was the past and present role of a high modernist ideology. Whilst the earlier presentations set out the core high modernist thinking and practise, presentations considering the present day sought to nuance understandings of its influence today, thinking about responses and complexities ‘on the ground’, the degree to which high modernism mixed with more neoliberal and market-oriented dynamics. The bricolage of current ideological influences on governments was highlighted.

This fruitful debate about the present state of ideology and politics in Africa’s developmental, more illiberal states is planned to continue. Royal Holloway will organise a second symposium in the autumn.

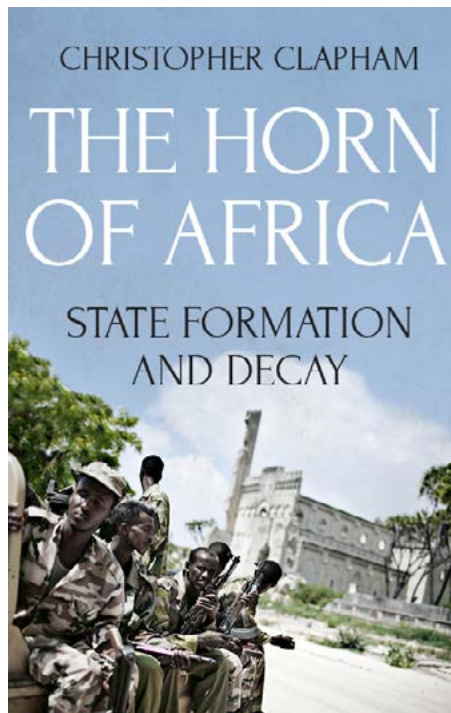
Our efforts were kindly supported by the African Studies Centre, Horn of Africa Seminar Series and African History and Politics Seminar, with significant additional finance from Green Templeton College and the Economic and Social Science Research Council.





# Horn of Africa Seminar

Convener, Jason Mosley, Research Associate, African Studies Centre



The Horn of Africa Seminar brings together students and scholars interested in examining the region from a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective. In hosting lectures by experienced researchers alongside post-graduates, and in mixing academic and policy research, we hope to come to a shared, factually informed and politically relevant understanding of trends in the region. During the 2016–17 academic year, the seminar hosted a mix of individual presenters, panel discussions and book launches, as well as a two-day symposium in collaboration with the Oxford Central Africa Forum on High Modernism and the question of its return to eastern and central Africa in particular. Cases discussed ranged from Ethiopia and Rwanda to Dubai, Angola and Ghana. The symposium included a screening of parts of **'Ghana's Electric Dreams: Waiting for Light'** and a discussion with co-producer Stephan F. Miescher.

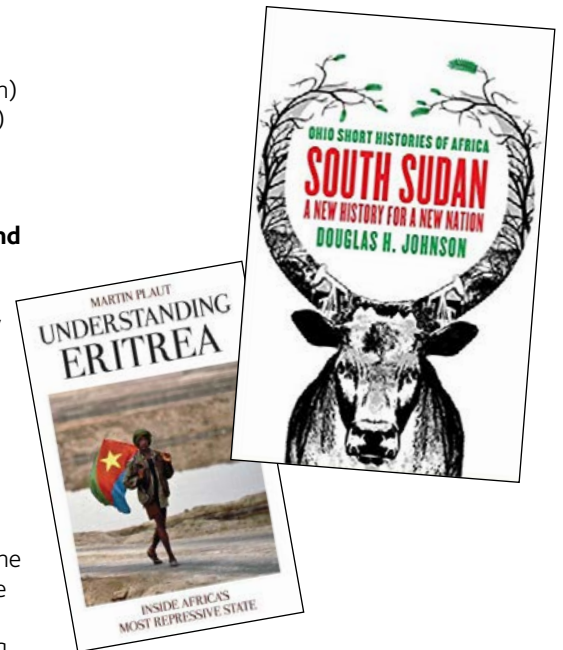
Two panel discussions centred on recent publications on the Horn. In November, Pip Bevan (Mokoro), Catherine Dom (Mokoro) and Sarah Vaughan (Edinburgh) discussed changes in 'rural' Ethiopian communities, based on evidence from

the third round of WIDE, a 20-year longitudinal study. In May, Michael Walls (UCL), Sarah Vaughan (Edinburgh) and Christopher Clapham (Cambridge) discussed the latter's new book, **The Horn of Africa: State Formation & Decay**. Other books discussed at the seminar this year included **Ethiopia and Eritrea: an enduring animosity?** by Martin Plaut (ICS) and **South Sudan: A New History for a New Nation** by Douglas Johnson (Independent).

The seminar hosted presentations covering the politics of performative violence in Somalia; modernist architecture and the global politics of heritage management, looking in particular at Eritrea's capital Asmara; the political dimensions of natural resource conflict and peacebuilding in Darfur; practices of representativeness among Muslims in Kenya, considering the history of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims; the relationship between politics and economy in Sudan; religion and ethnicity as venues of opposition in Ethiopia; Anya-Nya propaganda and Israel's involvement in Sudan's first civil war; and religious ideas and cultures of violence, looking at the case of violent Islamists in Kenya. Speakers included Hassan Mwakimako (Pwani University College), Ngala Chome (Durham), Yotam Gidron (Oxford), Terje Ostebo (University of Florida), Laura Mann (LSE), Pete Chonka (Edinburgh), Edward Denison (UCL) and Brendan Bromwich (King's College London).

The seminar series gratefully acknowledges the financial and institutional support of the African Studies Centre, as well as fruitful collaboration with the Oxford Central Africa Forum, the African Studies Seminar, the African History and Politics Seminar, and Mokoro. Our seminar series benefitted enormously from the contributions of the presenters, and from the participants in the discussions. Thank you again for your interest and engagement.

August 2017



## South Africa Discussion Group

We had several high-profile South African visitors this year and the much of the discussion group's activities was focused on their work. Prof. Deborah Posel from the University of Cape Town presented papers on her ongoing work on nonracialism and on her revisionist history of apartheid as, in part, a consumerist project. Prof. Thula Simpson presented on his recently published history of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress. Prof. Shireen Hassim from the University of the Witwatersrand spoke on the state of South African universities and on her work in progress on gender and sexuality in South African history and politics. Beyond showcasing the work of our visitors, the group provided a forum for masters and doctoral students to present work in progress on South African matters. We also convened several discussion groups, attended by South Africanists scattered throughout the university, interpreting the ongoing dramas in the fluid and unstable world of contemporary South African politics.



# Workshop on Everyday Citizenship in Africa

Arnold Chamunogwa

On Tuesday 20 June 2017, the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID) hosted a workshop under the theme “Rethinking Everyday Citizenship in Africa,” as part of the annual Law and Social Order in Africa workshop series. The workshop was convened by Arnold Chamunogwa a 3<sup>rd</sup> year DPhil student in International Development. The presenters were mostly doctoral students and early career researchers drawn from the University of Oxford, London School of Economics and University of Cambridge. The panels were chaired by senior academics from ODID and the African Studies Centre.

The first panel was on ‘Citizenship and crises’ and it was chaired by Prof. Jonny Steinberg. McDonald Lewanika’s (London School of Economics) paper explained how protest movements that recently emerged in Zimbabwe redefined notions of ‘civil-political citizenship’ in their attempt to proffer alternative forms of activism different from traditional civil society and mainstream opposition political party initiatives. Simukai Chigudu’s (University of Oxford) paper demonstrated how the ‘salvation agenda’ adopted by medical practitioners during Zimbabwe’s cholera outbreak in 2008 inadvertently helped to perpetuate and, in some ways, exacerbated existing social hierarchies, which in turn shaped the local understandings and expressions of citizenship by both medical practitioners and the affected populations. Robtel Neajai Pailey’s (University of Oxford) paper illustrated how conceptualizations of citizenship in Liberia changed from passive, identity-based citizenship emphasizing rights and entitlements to more active, practice-based citizenship privileging duties and responsibilities, as Liberia moved from being a country of immigration to one of emigration.

The second panel was on ‘Land and Citizenship’ and it was chaired by Prof. Nikita Sud, and it

had two presentations. Dr Emily LeRoux-Rutledge’s (London School of Economics) paper explained how seemingly ‘gender-blind constructions of citizenship’ promulgated by the constitution are encountered and reinterpreted during struggles over land in the rural village of Maluakon, in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan. Arnold Chamunogwa’s (University of Oxford) paper showed how the land reform exercise in Mazowe District Zimbabwe resulted in the creation of imagined communities of ‘patriotic citizens’ with patriotism being narrowly defined based on ‘loyalty’ and ‘obedience’ to the ruling party.

The third panel was on “Political Identities, Subjectivities and Citizenship’ and it was chaired by Prof. Jocelyn Alexander, and it had three presentations. Eugenija Kovaliova’s (University of Copenhagen) paper unpacked how local expressions of citizenship in Palma, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique were altered through the complex contestations between local communities, multi-national gas companies and government officials following the discovery of off-shore gas reserves. Kristina Pikovskaia’s (University of Oxford) paper demonstrated how informal sector organizations in Harare, Zimbabwe challenged and redefined the notion of citizenship as they formulated alternative discourses of the informal economy that were used by vendors to confront the city council and police. Christine van Hooft’s (University of Cambridge) paper showed how ‘exchange-based notions of citizenship’ incentivize the rapid creation of districts in Uganda.

The workshop was funded by the Oxford Department of International Development and the African Studies Center. The workshop was attended by a total of 30 participants drawn from across the social sciences and humanities departments of the University of Oxford.

# Researching Africa Day 2017

Dan Paget

On a sunny Saturday morning in March this year, 120 people were packed into the Nissan Lecture Theatre on Woodstock Road. Once again, St Anthony’s was playing host to Researching Africa Day (RAD). This student-led and student-attended conference has become something of an institution at Oxford. Next year, RAD will be 20 years old.

This one-day event has become an integrated part of African studies at Oxford. Students attend RAD as undergraduates and then graduates. Many budding Africanists attend RAD while on the MSc in African Studies. More still come while writing their doctorates.

RAD draws not just a national, but an international crowd which seems to stretch further across the globe with each passing year. This March, speakers came to address the conference from as far and wide as Bologna, Basel, Hong Kong and Geneva.

The metropolitan ensemble of speakers was fitting, because this year RAD was dedicated to when African studies goes global, confusingly. It was about when Africanists study phenomena that are not just African. Some Africanists examine subjects that by their very nature cross continents, like migration, or transcend them, like the Cold War. Most Africanists study things that occur at multiple sites, some in Africa, some elsewhere.

Students of matters such as these often find that their research has several possible homes. As if academic study wasn’t complex enough, they find that their work at once belongs to one or more schools of area studies, and to one or more disciplines that are delineated by subject matter, not regional boundaries.

These questions of orientation and self-definition affect us all. They have implications for who pays





## OUCAN Annual Conference

The Oxford University China-Africa Network (OUCAN) is an academic, multi-dimensional organisation that seeks to forge cross-disciplinary and trans-regional links between researchers, practitioners, and officials around the phenomenon of Chinese engagement with Africa. The OUCAN Annual Conference is the flagship event of OUCAN. Past conference themes include Natural Resources in the Changing Landscape of China-Africa Relations (2016), New Spheres of Development Finance: The Role of Chinese Finance in Africa's Infrastructure Landscape (2015). On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017, OUCAN hosted its annual conference with the title: 'Opportunism or Altruism? Global Health in China-Africa Relations?'

Today, global health is a multibillion-dollar enterprise. It is driven by growing recognition of the interconnectedness of the world's populations; fears that deadly diseases like Ebola or avian flu can rapidly spread around the globe; the threat of bioterrorism; a desire to reduce global inequalities in health; efforts to promote economic development; and the political and economic interests of donor countries. Academic and policy discourses in global health increasingly recognise China as a major player in the field. It is argued that China's approach to global health is distinctive: based on its unique history, comparative strength, and policies driven by several governmental ministries. Such received wisdom should not be taken at face value but should be scrutinised rigorously. The current scale and complexity of China's global-health assistance may be unprecedented, but the central motivations, organising principles, and modes of operation that characterise it are not.

Invited guests including academics, analysts and practitioners from Oxford University, the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, Queen Mary University of London, University of Edinburgh, University of Warwick, the Open University, Georgetown University, the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Overseas Development Institute, and Aspen Health Management convened for a riveting and through-provoking series of discussions about the manifold ways in which health features in China-Africa relations over the one-day conference. A delegation of about 40 people added to the dynamism of the event. The three panels respectively looked at the historical context of China-Africa global health cooperation; at Chinese contributions to pooled multilateral health development funds and Chinese military interventions in medical humanitarian emergencies; and the growth of Chinese private actors in African health systems and pharmaceuticals.

The range of discussions shone a light on the constellation of bureaucracy, money, power, techno-science, mortality, vulnerability, and hope that animate the promises and shortcomings of China-Africa global health cooperation. A follow-up to this meeting is currently under discussion so that the research papers presented might be published in a special issue of a relevant journal.

The event would not have been possible without the generous support of many people and institutions. The Oxford University China Centre generously provided the venue and subsidised refreshments throughout the day. As OUCAN, we would like to thank the staff of St Hugh's College for graciously hosting us. We are very grateful to the African Studies Centre and the Oxford Department for International Development for their financial contributions to this conference. We must make special mention of the Africa Oxford Initiative, who gave us a substantial grant that has allowed us to hold the event free of charge.

**Simukai Chigudu**



*Members of OUCAN team giving invited guests a tour of Oxford. From left to right: Simukai Chigudu (University of Oxford), Marlee Tichenor (University of Edinburgh), Maddalena Procopio (University of Warwick), Lizhi Huang (Beijing Foreign Studies University), Harry Verhoeven (Georgetown University), Jonathan Kennedy (Queen Mary University of London), Sa'eed Husaini (University of Oxford), Chen Zhao (University of Oxford).*

attention to what we have to say. More alarmingly, they affect our near-term career prospects.

To speak to these heady issues, Professor Miles Larmer opened RAD with a keynote address. He talked about his forthcoming work which compares nationalist African movements to similar movements across the world.

Between the close of that opening speech and the end of the day, 24 speakers presented papers on eight different panels. They covered everything from protest, to Nollywood, non-African identities and diplomacy. We heard about an array of things ranging from black hair, to dams, motorcycles and a curious skull. Speakers were rewarded with lively and penetrating discussions from their audiences.

Jodie Yuzhou Sun convened a careers workshop in which participants heard from and exchanged ideas with people with a wealth of career experience. We finished with an inspiring closing address by Professor Robin Cohen who told stories of three people who tie Africa to the rest of the world across time.

I would like to thank all those that helped to make RAD possible this year. That includes St Anthony's College, the African Studies Centre and all of those from the MSc who volunteered to help out on the day. A special thank you goes to Millie Oates, Jonny Steinberg, Miles Larmer and Robin Cohen, who all worked behind the scenes or on the day to make the conference possible. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration to all of the speakers and participants. It was inspiring and humbling to see how much they made the day their own.

Researching Africa Day was co-organised by Eleanor Beavor, Jodie Yuzhou Sun and Dan Paget.



# Teaching Exchange Fort Hare, August 2016

Ella Jeffreys (2015–16)



University of Fort Hare  
*Together in Excellence*

During the summer of 2016, Kholood Khair and I were privileged to have the opportunity to work with the dynamic staff and students at the Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research (FHISER). As part of the ongoing link between this prestigious South African institution and the Oxford African Studies Centre, we were able to convene a series of workshops for students undertaking a Masters degree in African Studies.

The sessions delivered by Kholood Khair centered on anthropological research methods: emphasizing practical techniques such as participant observation, writing ethnography, and the use of visual sources while also tracing the development of anthropology and its relationship with African Studies as a discipline. Following this, I worked with students on historical sources, exploring oral histories and archival methodologies. In conjunction with these workshops we accompanied students on a visit to the Liberation Archives at the Alice Campus of Fort Hare. This provided an excellent opportunity for participating students to apply some of the techniques which Kholood and I had examined in tutorials. All of our discussions with FHISER students, both inside of the department and out, were testament to their keen insight and intellect. The critical analysis that they brought to bear upon the Liberation Archives was particularly impressive.

We were also able to present papers on our respective research projects. The questions and feedback from the staff at FHISER have been critical for both of us in the process of turning our dissertation research into papers with the intention of publication.

The generosity and hospitality from everyone at FHISER was incredible. We would like to thank both the academic and administrative staff for all of their help, especially Dr Teresa Connor, Dr Octavia Sibanda, Francis Sibanda and Anam Mjeluka. We are also grateful for the friendship and guidance of FHISER's PhD students, in particular Sipho Sibanda and his family.



## Africa at Oxford

When I came to do the MSc African Studies in Oxford, I often wondered what my architecture department back at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana would be like if we had the resources and opportunities available to researchers and students at Oxford. And while I enjoyed the MSc and learned a lot (in spite of the very long reading lists and general intensity), I also wished that there were more connections to African academics and researchers reflected in our reading lists and discussions.

This is why I jumped at the opportunity to work with the newly-formed Africa Oxford Initiative (AfOx) as the Communications Manager when I moved back to Oxford in 2016, a year after graduating. AfOx was formed by staff and students at the University with a primary aim to make a major contribution to Africa's research and academic landscape by supporting the development of equitable and sustainable partnerships between African partners and Oxford academics, departments and colleges.

Part of what I do as Communications Manager for AfOx is to make people, projects and opportunities more visible. This first involved building our website – which among others has a growing database of all academics in Oxford with Africa-focused research. This is a rather difficult task, with the devolved nature of Oxford – with people in several departments, colleges, centres and institutes. I also feature Africans based in or passing through Oxford. There are already a number of people doing amazing things in Oxford, and telling multiple, diverse stories of African experiences in Oxford is important to me.

Before I started working with AfOx, I noticed that many of the viral stories with the key terms 'Oxford' and 'Africa' were of African students having to raise funds to be able to attend, and while this is one truth, there are other stories. Like Athol Williams from South Africa, who has 6 degrees from 6 top institutions and recently got a distinction in his MPhil in Political Philosophy; like Kathi Oke and Simukai Chigudu who have been appointed as Departmental Lecturers even before submitting their DPhil dissertations; like Ana Namburete who is biomedical engineer developing innovations around ultrasound analysis of foetal brains.

It has been a very exciting, sometimes frustrating but a very rewarding experience overall. I learn new things all the time from interacting with brilliant, thoughtful people on a daily basis. While there are certainly frustrations that come with the terrain, it helps to remind myself of all the positive impacts that we are making with AfOx, and also that in the grand scheme of things, working in beautiful old buildings with the occasional wine reception is really not a bad setting to work in! We're excited about our future projects, and university staff, lecturers and African alumni have been amazing in their responses and offers to contribute in various ways, which makes all the difference.

Kuukuwa Manful  
(2014–15)





## Monrovia Football Academy

Will Smith (2014–15)

On October 19, 2016, I returned to the African Studies Centre for the first time since June 2015. Very little had changed – a special energy consumed the seminar room, those stairs to the top floor felt endless, and they had delicious (and free) biscuits. My circumstances, however, had changed quite substantially. When I left Oxford, I was working tirelessly to turn an imagined institution into a reality. My co-founder, Sekou Dgeorges Manubah, and I were finalizing the groundwork required to launch Monrovia Football Academy, the first school in Liberia to combine high-quality education with professional football training. The venture was wrought with uncertainty, and the truth is we did not know if it would work.

16 months later, I was back in the ASC Seminar room to deliver a talk on Monrovia Football Academy and, more specifically, the implications of our experience for the growing sport for development sector. In many ways, my Oxford experience had come full circle.

### The Academy

Since opening in October 2015, Monrovia Football Academy has grown from 27 students and one academic grade to 70 students and four grades (3–6). Our students are with us from 8:30am–6:00pm, Monday–Friday, with breakfast, life skills lessons, and football training in the morning, lunch at noon, and academic classes in the afternoon.

We are not a football factory. Rather, we use football as a positive-incentive

mechanism to improve academic performance, break down gender barriers, and prepare our students to lead positive change in Liberia.

The Academy's innovation has attracted attention and visits from high-profile individuals such as President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2015 FIFA Coach of the Year Jill Ellis, and several Liberian footballers, pop stars, and government officials. In August 2016, Liberia's Minister of Education stated that "Monrovia Football Academy is an exciting, innovative approach to academic and leadership training that must be watched." In her 2017 State of the Nation speech, President Sirleaf pledged her support for our work by proclaiming that Liberia should address budgetary support to the Academy.

The past two years have been incredibly challenging, but we are excited about our progress.

### Beyond Liberia

In 2017, our focus is to grow and consolidate the Academy in Liberia. However, our long-term ambition reaches further, extending across the African continent. Over the past few months, I have been working with an African philanthropist on the potential to replicate the Academy's unique approach to academic and leadership training across Africa. The idea is to establish African-led sport academies that deliver high-quality academic programs to the continent's brightest and most talented youth. The intended result: a pan-African high-quality education revolution.



### Oxford's Contribution

In attendance at my October 2016 talk were Oxford scholars Dr. Robtel Neajai Pailey (MSc '07), Professor Jonny Steinberg, and Professor Anke Hoeffler, among others. Each of these individuals is connected to Monrovia Football Academy, as a board member, personal advisor, and impact evaluator, respectively. Their commitment to the Academy has been vital to our success, and it has also ensured we maintain close ties with Oxford.

This is important because Oxford University opens doors. It is an intellectual hub, a creative space that enables interaction with global leaders in every field imaginable. It also has imperfections – its imperialist roots, its lack of diversity, its elitism – and those imperfections need fixing. As they are confronted, a special form of intellectual creative destruction ensues, a process through which Oxford students develop new ideas, new methods, new solutions to the university's (and, more broadly, the world's) biggest problems.

My cohort was particularly influenced by that creative space – in just two years, members of our class have established the Africa Foresight Group, Sunshine Cinema, Sociarchi, and several other vibrant entrepreneurial ventures. I suppose this is the meaning of the Oxford experience – to enter one of the world's most vibrant academic communities, embrace it with all its glory and faults, and challenge oneself to do important work and create positive change.



# South Africa's email leaks scandal

Micah Reddy (2012–13)

I joined the small, tightly-knit team at the amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism in Johannesburg earlier this year expecting to play a part in breaking stories of high profile corruption and abuse of power. AmaBhungane, after all, has a long track record of hard-hitting exposés. But I could hardly have anticipated that, just months into the job, I'd be involved in exposing the biggest leak of emails and highly sensitive data in the history of post-apartheid SA.

The leaks detail how the patriarchs of the politically-connected Gupta family – brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh – built a business empire predicated on corruption, influence-peddling and the virtual takeover of state-owned companies.

The Guptas landed in the country 1990s as obscure businessmen from India with wildly ambitious aims and a political calculus that was as brazen as it was simple. They soon worked their way into the heart of political power by cosyng up to prominent political figures including Jacob Zuma, whose son Duduzane they got into business with.

In the process the Guptas have made 'state capture' a household term and given lie to South African exceptionalism and the idea that our democratic institutions are resilient. The country's institutions of oversight and accountability have been systematically undermined to protect the politico-business faction centred on the Guptas and Zuma.

Long before the leaks came to light numerous damning media exposés and a hard-hitting report by the Public Protector (South Africa's equivalent of a national ombudsman) detailed how the Guptas influenced key appointments and removals at the boards of state-owned companies, government departments, and even ministerial positions.

That the family had corrupt relationships with high-level civil servants, executives of state-owned

enterprises and politicians, including the president, was already well known. But the leaks have added great depth and detail to our understanding of the nexus between the Gupta syndicate and the political faction that has coalesced around Zuma. And we are able to corroborate what the emails tell us with a mountain of other evidence that has accumulated over the years.

There is now clear-cut, incontrovertible evidence of Gupta-linked companies acting as gatekeepers for lucrative government tenders, creaming off millions, and sometimes even billions of rands in kickbacks. Several major multinationals have been implicated in colluding with the Guptas and facilitating their corruption, or at least turning a blind eye to it.

The leaks have also blown the lid off complex illicit cash flows, revealing how the Gupta network used a web of front companies in South Africa and abroad, notably in Dubai.

In one particularly egregious case, a lavish and highly controversial Gupta wedding was paid for with millions of rands siphoned from a community dairy scheme and laundered through Dubai. The Guptas' auditors, KPMG, gave these transactions a clean bill of health.



*Businessman Atul Gupta with South African President Jacob Zuma*

The public relations firm Bell Pottinger has also suffered enormous reputational damage from their association with the Guptas. Seeing evidence in writing of Bell Pottinger staffers working with the increasingly reclusive Guptas and scripting their divisive rhetoric has made the scandal that much more 'real' to the public.

It has been a very turbulent few months in the political life of South Africa, in large part because of the leaks. And as I've worked on these stories I've often thought of how the MSc equipped me with valuable tools to analyse the capture of the state and the powerful neopatrimonial networks that have arisen in the country.

It's not enough to simply present the facts at face value. Journalists covering South Africa's dizzying politics would do well to turn to academic sources more often. Perhaps then we'd be less prone to surprise at the way politics continues to play out here.

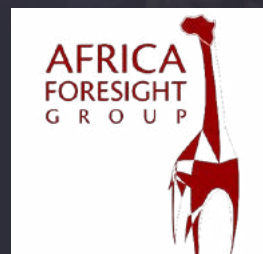






# Building an advisory firm for Africa

Yasmin Kumi (2014–15)



Building an advisory firm for Africa – that is the mission that Yasmin Kumi has been on for the past year, since she graduated from Oxford with an MBA and an MSc in African Studies. In September 2016, she moved to Ghana to follow her passion of fostering local economic value creation in Africa.

Yasmin is a senior business consultant with extensive working experience in African markets, having worked

with McKinsey & Company for 5 years. For her African Studies MSc dissertation, she traced the fortunes of a Ghanaian family export business over three generations. Over the years, Yasmin became increasingly aware of the capability gap suffered by local African companies due in part to the inaccessibility of premium consulting services typically only affordable by the larger multinationals. Local champion companies, as she likes to call them, are rarely in the spotlight. Her company Africa Foresight Group (AFG) seeks to change that: Placing the advancement of local champions at the centre of the narrative around business and development through private sector growth in Africa is an integral part of AFG's work. Yasmin and her team are convinced that having a number of African champions that operate internationally – on the continent and beyond – could promote pride and hope among African peoples, resulting in reduced brain drain due to increasing local opportunities. AFG's goal is to enable and support these companies as they grow, and in so doing disrupt the African services sector while also significantly contributing to sustainable growth on the continent.

Today, AFG's main office is based in Accra, Ghana, with 6 full-time staff and a talent pool of over 50 part-time consultants, advisors and researchers. The company has three service lines, through which the team intends to enhance a positive African self-image, increase domestic opportunity, and promote inclusive demographics.

The company is increasingly receiving attention in Ghana, most recently when Yasmin was awarded the Authenticity Project Award by entrepreneur Mo Issa. Moreover, AFG is steadily increasing its client base, ranging from private equity funds and agricultural financiers to mature local companies and investment advisory groups all the way from Singapore.

For the next 12 months, Yasmin and her team have big plans: They will be raising a seed-stage investment to finance the next phase of growth, hire about 5 new staff members, and open an office in Lagos, Nigeria. An advisory board has been established. It consists of five senior business leaders, one of whom is an Oxford alumnus and another a former Oxford professor.

The decision to build AFG was largely inspired by the education Yasmin received in Oxford while pursuing the African Studies degree. The team also pays tribute to the late Professor Raufu Mustapha for the Oxford Department for International Development, who encouraged Yasmin to take a leap and go full-time on AFG and follow her dream, and who died in August 2017. The next chapter of AFG is dedicated to him. He was wholehearted in encouraging young Oxonians to believe in their path while staying humble at all times, being honest about failure and celebrating successes in building better Africa.



# African Studies Class of 2016–17



**Francois-Xavier Ada Affana** **Cameroon**  
MLitt International Relations  
University of St Andrews

Understanding how the Nigerian State works through its fight against Boko Haram



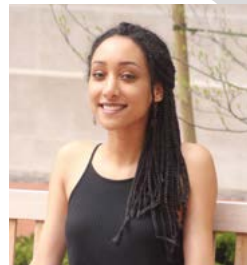
**Iyone Agboraw** **UK**  
BA Social Studies  
Institut d Etudes Politiques de Paris, France

Barriers to Autism Care in Ghana: Problematising the 'Culture' Argument



**Folahanmi Aina** **Nigeria**  
MA International  
Development Policy  
Seoul National University

Youth and Electoral Violence: Recalibrating Northern Nigeria's Democratization



**Hanna Amanuel** **Belgium**  
BA Social and Cultural Anthro-  
pology Development Policy  
Harvard University

States of Suspension: Navigating 'Habesh' Womanhood in Khartoum



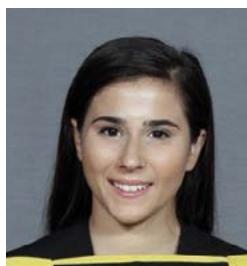
**Edmilson Angelo** **Angola**  
BSc African History  
The University of Westminster

An evaluation of states response to youth demands in Angola and its connection to the coming 2017 elections



**Margaret Babirye** **Uganda**  
MA Educational Policy and  
Planning  
Makerere University, Kampala

The Batwa Forest Dwellers' Access to Education in Uganda



**Katia Lopes** **South Africa**  
BA Anthropology, University  
of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg South Africa

Technovelopment: Development, discourse and technology hub in Johannesburg, South Africa



**Teemt Bekele** **USA**  
MA Political  
Addis Ababa University (Haile  
Selassie I) Ethiopia

The essentialization of Salafism in Addis Ababa



**Miller Bianucci** **USA**  
MA Business and  
Administrative Studies  
The University of St Andrews

The Environment is Like Our Hut': Education for Collaborative Conservation in Serengeti



**Benjamin Budd** **France**  
BA International France  
King's College London

'In debt we trust': Exploring the politics of development through microfinance in Kenya.



**James Burton** **Australia**  
BA Politics  
University of Sydney

Supporting Start-ups When it Matters: Lessons in Employment Generation from Nigeria



**Drew Calcagno** **USA**  
BSc Economics  
United States Naval Academy  
MD

A Fatal Price: The Costs of Uninformed Counter-Terrorism Efforts in Somalia



**Fernanda Carneiro** **Brazil**  
LLB Public Law, Pontificia  
Universidade Catolica de  
Minas Gerais

Invisible Power: The Role of Traditional Chiefs during the Democratic Process in Cote d'Ivoire



**Upile Chisala** **Malawi**  
BA Sociology  
New Mexico State University  
at Alamogordo

Zambia, Chief and Law: The institutionalization of birth on Likoma Island, Malawi



**Ruth Cookman** **UK**  
BA Human and Social  
Geography  
The University of Oxford

Social Media and the Representation of Africa; Nairobi on Snapchat





**Arshmeena Durrani** **UK**  
BA Modern History  
Liverpool John Moores  
University

An Emergent Phenomenon:  
A theory on the relationship  
between contemporary  
drone usage and power in  
sub-Saharan Africa



**Tim Epple** **Germany**  
BA International Relations  
University of Groningen  
Netherlands

Building Peace is like a Rainbow:  
Multi-Layered Peacebuilding  
and the Determinants of County  
Peace Committee Effectiveness  
in Post-War Liberia



**Yotam Gidron** **Israel**  
LLB Law  
Tel Aviv University

"One People, One Struggle":  
Any-Nya propaganda  
and the Israeli Mossad,  
1969–1971



**Bright Gyamfi** **USA**  
BA African History  
University of Notre Dame

Kwame Nkrumah, Pan-  
Africanism, and the  
Institute of African Studies



**Stanley Malindi** **South Africa**  
BA African History, University  
of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg South Africa

Traditional Authorities,  
Land Rights, and the  
Interventions of legal  
NGO's in South Africa



**Colin Manders** **UK**  
MA Politics  
King's College London

Neocolonial relationships  
in the extractive industries  
sector in two mineral rich  
African countries



**Lauren Mellows** **UK**  
BSc Politics  
The University of Bristol

Dressed to kill: mitumba  
clothing and young female  
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