NEWSLETTER OF THE STELLENBOSCH INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY





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# About STIAS

STIAS (The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study) is situated on the historic Mostertsdrift farm in the heart of Stellenbosch. It is a place where top researchers and intellectual leaders are nurtured and encouraged to find innovative and sustainable solutions to issues facing the world and, in particular, the country and the continent of Africa. To counter the loss of its best minds and promising young leaders, it provides the opportunity for highlevel research and intellectual development in an international context. STIAS attracts some of the world's leading scholars and researchers and enjoys international growth and recognition.



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# **From the STIAS Director**

It is a cliché to express surprise at how quickly time flies by (when you are busy!) – but here we are at STIAS: more than a full semester since the first newsletter was published, and time for the next one. Alternative ways of STIAS time keeping may state that in 2018 we have since conducted 30 Thursday fellows' seminars (all captured and summarised expertly on the STIAS website by Michelle Galloway), or that the first four fellows from our second Iso Lomso cohort (selected in April) have already joined us to start working on their projects.

Much else has happened at STIAS since the last issue: The invitation to join the SIAS group of Institutes for Advanced Study is a significant development for STIAS, both in terms of international recognition and status, as well as opening up new possibilities for our Iso Lomso fellows; details are covered separately in the newsletter.

Our primary selection process is now conducted on a semester basis by an extended Fellowship and Research Programme Committee which selects the core of the cohort of fellows-to-be from submissions submitted to STIAS by an announced deadline (all of which is explained in detail at **Application to the STIAS programme**).

STIAS is expanding its available office space, but it is with some sadness that we say goodbye to our good neighbours in the Wallenberg Centre, the National Institute for Theoretical Physics (NITheP). It is now more than a decade since that memorable NITHeP inauguration day when we were joined by **Stephen Hawking and Physics Nobel Laureates David Gross and George Smoot**. NITheP is set to become part of an expanded national initiative; the local hub will temporarily be accommodated on the Stellenbosch University campus, while from 2019 STIAS will be using the additional office space for its fellowship programme.

The process of appointing a new director at STIAS has now been concluded: after serving STIAS for 11 years in this capacity it is time for me to hand over the baton, and I am particularly pleased to be able to do so in the person of Professor Edward Kirumira, Professor of Sociology and outgoing Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Makerere University in Uganda. Edward is superbly equipped to lead STIAS towards new objectives and heights, and I wish him success in his new position. I am sure he can count on the full support of STIAS staff and all STIAS fellows.

You may still find me at STIAS in future, albeit in a somewhat more relaxed mood now that I will have fewer direct responsibilities here. Of course my commitment to and involvement with the STIAS programme remains unwavering!

Hendrik Geyer Director Stellenbosch, December 2018



# STIAS joins prestigious international group of Institutes for Advanced Study

"Being associated with such well-known and respected global institutions brings a stamp of quality which we hope will resonate across all of STIAS's activities and further enhance our goals and objectives," said STIAS Director Hendrik Geyer.

> Geyer was referring to the fact that at the end of 2018 STIAS was invited to join a group of international institutes for advanced study known by the acronym SIAS – Some Institutes for Advanced Study. This makes STIAS the first southern hemisphere and first African institute to join this consortium which includes nine institutes, namely: The Princeton Institute for Advanced Study; the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford; the National Humanities Center in North Carolina; the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard; the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study; the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study; the Berlin Institute for Advanced Study; the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies; and, the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study.

> "The invitation is a sign of recognition and appreciation of the quality of the STIAS programme," said Geyer. "It's also a clear signal that international Institutes for Advanced Study are increasingly engaging with the African academic and research world."

Geyer pointed out that STIAS has established good relationships over time with the individual institutes within SIAS to the extent that some have already accommodated Iso Lomso fellows from the STIAS early career advancement programme for African researchers in their programmes. "Being part of the collaboration will give us the prospect of proceeding along those lines in a more systematic way to explore the possibilities inherent in this programme, along with other aspects of the STIAS offering. There is much to be explored," he said. "STIAS is the first institute in Africa where leading researchers and intellectuals from across the world are supported to think innovatively and pursue sustainable solutions to the challenges facing the world, with a particular focus on Africa," added Geyer. "We aim to facilitate cuttingedge, cross-disciplinary research and the cross-pollination of ideas as well as 'out-of-the-box' thinking."

In making decisions about fellowship applications STIAS aims to advance overall scholarship but also to address the question to what extent any research proposed will feed into or benefit from interdisciplinary discourse. "It's about achieving a balance between critical reflection on real-life problems and how to approach them using resources from a multitude of disciplines and ensuring that meaningful discourse takes place among these not mutually exclusive areas," said Geyer.

In envisioning a programme that would fulfil these objectives STIAS early on took a cue from existing institutes of advanced study – some of whom are current members of the SIAS group.

# **Exchange of ideas**

"From the outset we wanted to avoid the image of an ivory tower. It's about facilitating and unleashing the potential of Africa as a leading contributor to global research and as a producer of new knowledge," said Geyer. "The aim was to establish an environment where there would be a reciprocal exchange of ideas between Africa and the global research community."

"With that in mind we have always tried to ensure an open channel for allowing ideas that emerge from this programme to be disseminated to a broader public. Letting people do at STIAS what they do in relative



Above: Robert Newman (centre), President and Director of the National Humanities Center represented SIAS on the visit to STIAS. He is seen here with members of the STIAS Fellowship and Research Programme Committee from left: Bernhard Lategan, Jan-Hendrik Hofmeyr, Hendrik Geyer, Louise Viljoen, Francis Nyamnjoh and Louis Jonker isolation, while doing everything we can to ensure that this impacts on the broader world."

These features resonated with the SIAS consortium which states among the conditions that any potential member should fulfill: a commitment to the highest standards of scholarship; a competitive fellowship programme; sustainable funding; and, independence from both university and government structures.

"Independence from university and state structures is an imperative," said Geyer, "and distinguishes members of this group from other institutions with similar names which are often closely tied to university programmes and directly operated as part of universities." Geyer also believes that the policy of maintaining a strong focus on the fellowship programme and not trying to run an elaborate conference programme has served STIAS well.

The SIAS invitation is a result of ongoing interactions with and official visits from the directors of the other institutes over a number of years culminating in a visit in August 2018 by the director of the National Humanities Centre in North Carolina, Robert Newman, which gave the final seal of approval for the invitation. The SIAS group meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest and to explore potential partnerships and collaborations. **c** 

# An opportunity to direct trends

# An interview with newly appointed STIAS Director, Edward K. Kirumira

Edward K. Kirumira



## STIAS has appointed Prof. Edward K. Kirumira as its new Director from the beginning of 2019. Kirumira succeeds Hendrik Geyer who completed his final term at the end of 2018.

"It's scary, but a great privilege to hold this position," said Kirumira. "We talk about decolonialities and Africanisation but how do we put them into practice. I see myself as part of that experiment. STIAS presents itself as a very good opportunity for me. I hope it will make me be able to listen to various voices, to be part of the space rather than coming with my agenda. I'm excited. It's a privilege I take very seriously."

"And especially at Stellenbosch," he added. "It should happen here and will probably make much more impact than at another institution. I hope it can be seen as part of reconstructing. Scholars have a responsibility to reconstruct."

# **Illustrious background**

Prof. Kirumira comes to STIAS from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Makerere University in Uganda where he was Professor of Sociology, Dean and Principal. He trained at Makerere University, Exeter University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the University of Copenhagen in collaboration with Harvard University. He specialised in population and reproductive health, and has done extensive research on HIV/AIDS, emergent diseases and international health issues, health-seeking behaviour, poverty and rural-development studies.

Included among many prestigious national and international appointments, Prof. Kirumira has been a member of the Partnership Committee for HIV & AIDS, Malaria and TB National Response of the Uganda AIDS Commission. He is a Fellow of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) and was treasurer and council member of UNAS and Chairperson of the Academy's Forum on Health and Nutrition. He also chaired the Resource Mobilisation and Planning Committee of the Uganda Central Co-ordinating Mechanism for the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria country programme and, at the time of his appointment to STIAS, was the Chairman of the Uganda Central Coordination Mechanism for the Global Fund.

He has provided technical assistance in programme development and project design, management and evaluation in many African countries including South Africa (where he contributed to the development of the government's AIDS programme), as well as the United States, Mexico, Denmark and the United Kingdom. He has led or been part of more than 20 technical teams on behalf of the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS, the United Nations AIDS Programme, the UN Development Programme, the UN Population Fund, the Danish International Development Agency, the Swedish government, the Norwegian government, the US National Academies and the Ugandan government. He is also a founder member and chair of the Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA).

Kirumira therefore brings a strong research and advisory background as well as extensive experience in institution and network building to STIAS.

"I come from a position of building higher education institutional capacity from both an academic and administration view. If you don't have good governance it's difficult for scholarship to flourish," he said. "I want to bring to STIAS a passion for scholarship but also a passion for situating that scholarship within an institutional structure. And also feeding into development processes without having these processes necessarily affecting or directing scholarship."

"It's hugely difficult to build scholarship capacity from a single university. You need to work across disciplines and institutions."

"Part of the attraction is that STIAS presents itself as that space," he continued. "Not constrained by institution or discipline or trends but with the power to feed and direct those trends."

"It's also a space for good, upcoming, young scholars to test their ideas. Irrespective of funding – or having to wait for it – irrespective of institution and irrespective of some of the more negative forces in scholarship. I'm excited to be part of a space that allows somebody to have these opportunities. I'm looking forward to being part of that project."

He is particularly looking forward to the coming together of established and young scholars.

"The Iso Lomso programme, for example, makes more sense if you keep the mixture. With old and young working together you get better results. That's one of the problems in the political sphere – the young and old are not talking to each other. There is not enough mutual respect, trust, confidence. And we have to do it in academia – we are the people who are supposed to create and influence knowledge."

# **Creating academic communities**

"STIAS has the advantage of inviting a scholar here to do what they want to but also reminding them that they are part of a community of scholars, not super scholars," he said. "The lunches and weekly seminars have the potential to build communities of scholars that listen to and get new ideas from other disciplines."

"It's about growing and affecting the people around you rather than just becoming 'super' in your area."

"If we want change we must be part of it rather than waiting for someone else or for a crisis to impose it," he added.

"My HIV/AIDS work made it very clear that there is too much crisis management in the world. There is usually no quick fix, problems are generally systemic. I hope that by being here scholars can impact substantially on systems and processes in the countries they come from."

Kirumira is also particularly keen to bring his knowledge of the continent to STIAS. He has the advantage of having visited every country in Africa and having worked in three quarters of them.

"I believe there is an opportunity to think critically about broader Africa scholarship,' he said. "I believe we can use the advantages STIAS offers to grow African scholarship. Bringing African scholars to STIAS and giving them a space to craft truly African networks." He pointed out that other attempts to do this have been stumped by lack of funding or by having the funding determine the activities.

"STIAS must continue to be a place where African scholars can engage with the rest of the world on an equal footing."

"I think I appreciate and understand Africa significantly" he said. "I want to bring my understanding and appreciation of the continent and put it into the scholarship capacities and see whether we can make a change. I see people's presence at STIAS as just the beginning of a contribution to something bigger."

"People may not see STIAS as unapologetically an African 'political' project," he concluded. "But we need to express and be proud of this. I hope that STIAS can position itself even more strongly as a thinking/knowledge creator. We need to grab the potential and purpose for which it was created, in dialogue with the best minds from all parts of the world."  $\alpha$ 

"STIAS must continue to be a place where African scholars can engage with the rest of the world on an equal footing."

# **NEWS ROUNDUP** STIAS LECTURE SERIES 2018

# Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform – Susan Rose-Ackerman, Henry R. Luce Professor of Law and Political Science, Yale University

Corruption is the misuse of public power for private gain. It involves the illicit buying and selling of government benefits or payoffs to avoid costs. This lecture explored the economic roots of corrupt transactions and their negative political and economic consequences. It concluded by considering some of the distinctive features of the current explosion of corruption scandals in South Africa and allegations of state capture.

Susan Rose-Ackerman is Henry R. Luce Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale University and is currently writing a book on policy making and comparative administrative law. She has written widely on the political economy of corruption and has advised the World Bank,



the International Monetary Fund and the InterAmerican Development Bank on anti-corruption policy. Her recent books include *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform,* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition with Bonnie Palifka, (the first edition from 1999 was translated into 17 languages); *Due Process of Lawmaking: The United States, South Africa, Germany and the European Union* (with Stefanie Egidy and James Fowkes, 2015); *Greed, Corruption, and the Modern State* (co-editor); and, *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption* (vols. I and II, co-editor). She directs the programme in Comparative Administrative Law at Yale Law School, and she holds a BA from Wellesley College and a PhD in economics from Yale University.

# Reading the World – Abdulrazak Gurnah, Emeritus Professor of English and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Kent

# See http://stias.ac.za/news/2018/04/reading-the-world-public-lecture-by-abdulrazak-gurnah/

One way of conceiving of 'world literature' is as an openness in the west towards the literatures of the rest of the world. Such a conception already assumes the centrality of the west and anticipates the world's reciprocal openness towards it. This assumption is evident in configurations which are a legacy of colonialism. This presentation addressed the following questions:

- Is 'world literature' an expression of a crisis in an academic discipline which now desires to open itself up to the 'world'?
- What is the place of the local in this concern?
- What does it mean to speak of 'world literature from the global south' and what part does the concept play in the foregoing discussion?

Abdulrazak Gurnah was born in Zanzibar and studied in England. He joined the University of Kent, England as a lecturer in the School of English in 1985 and retired from there in 2017 as a Professor in English and Postcolonial Literatures. His academic publications include two edited volumes of essays Essays in African Writing and The Cambridge Companion to Salman Rushdie as well as several essays in journals and book chapters. He has published nine novels which include *Memory of Departure* (1987) which was shortlisted for the David Higham Prize, Paradise (1994) which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, the Whitbread Prize and the Writers Guild Prize and was awarded the ALOA Prize, By the Sea (2001) which was longlisted for the Booker Prize, shortlisted for the Los Angeles Times Prize and awarded the Témoin du Monde Prize, and Desertion (2005) which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize. His latest novel is Gravel Heart (2017). He was on the judging panel for the Booker Prize 2016 and is a member of the Council of the Royal Society for Literature.

Susan Rose-Ackerman



Abdulrazak Gurnah

# Land Restitution and the Moral Modernity of the New South African State – Olaf Zenker, Professor of Social Anthropology at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Fribourg

## See http://stias.ac.za/news/2018/05/the-multi-facetedand-thorny-issue-of-land-restitution-in-south-africapublic-lecture-by-olaf-zenker/

The South African parliament's recent decision to review the constitutional property clause possibly allowing for expropriation without compensation has fervently brought the land question back into public debate. While expressing a deeply felt and justified popular discontent that land reform has fallen short of its promises to redress race-based dispossessions of the colonial past, this debate arguably also distracts from the fact that land reform's insufficiencies have been political rather than constitutional and often related to problems of implementation.

Focusing on land restitution and using an extended case study of a successful land claim, this lecture scrutinised the complex processes involved in translating controversial demands to land into a juridified land claim and contested court case (going up to the Supreme Court of Appeal) and subsequently re-translating and partially implementing the legal outcomes into local realities on the ground. The analysis shows how the seemingly monolithic entity of 'the state' in practice disassembles into heterogeneous agencies involved in legislating, judicialising and administering land restitution under highly complex, constraining and constantly shifting conditions, thereby also producing unintended consequences detrimental to the ultimate purpose of land reform.

Based on its exemplary case study, the talk offered general observations regarding the pitfalls and potentials of current land restitution, and pointed towards possibilities for improving the overall process. Conceiving land restitution as an exemplary site, at which the moral modernity of the new South African state is contested, renegotiated and made, the lecture came to a qualified conclusion: restitution has been more successful in various ways than its public reputation suggests, but surely can and must be improved in order to live up to justified public expectations. However, it is doubtful that expropriation without compensation is likely to solve restitution's problems which are complex and more related to the relative failure of the state to effectively use what is already at its disposal.

Olaf Zenker is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). He is currently writing a book entitled *Land Restitution and the Moral Modernity of the New South African State.* Focusing on South Africa, Northern Ireland and Germany, his research has dealt with political and legal issues such as statehood, the rule of law, plural normative orders, modernity, justice, conflict and identity formations, as well as sociolinguistics and anthropological epistemologies. His book publications include: *The State and the Paradox of Customary Law in Africa* (Routledge, 2018); *South African Homelands as Frontiers: Apartheid's Loose Ends*  *in the Postcolonial Era* (Routledge, 2017); *Transition and Justice: Negotiating the Terms of New Beginnings in Africa* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); *Irish/ness Is All Around Us: Language Revivalism and the Culture of Ethnic Identity in Northern Ireland* (Berghahn Books, 2013); and *Beyond Writing Culture: Current Intersections of Epistemologies and Representational Practices* (Berghahn Books, 2010). He holds an MSc from the London School of Economics, a PhD from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and a Habilitation from the University of Bern in Social Anthropology and an MA in Linguistics & Literature (University of Hamburg).

# Rupture. The Global Crisis of Liberal Democracy: Trump, Brexit and Beyond – Manuel Castells, Professor at the University of Southern California and Donald Gordon STIAS fellow

## See http://stias.ac.za/news/2018/08/trump-brexit-andbeyond-a-need-to-nurture-new-values-public-lecture-bymanuel-castells/

We live in a world engulfed in multiple crises. Financial volatility, rampant inequality, global terrorism, moral uncertainty, climate change, widespread racism, sexism, xenophobia and geopolitical tensions. Yet, there is a more fundamental crisis: the crisis of liberal democracy, the political system that established some sort of civility in our institutions after two centuries of struggle to reach a model of democracy. This is collapsing today worldwide – because institutions only exist if they live in people's minds. Today the large majority of people in the planet do not feel represented by their governments. While they believe in democracy they do not believe they are living in democracy.

If there is a break-up between governments and citizens, we do not have any instruments to manage the multiple crises threatening our lives. Moreover, recent political developments show that people are ready for any alternative political option that they would feel identified with, regardless of its moral standing. This explains the rise to power of Trump, Brexit, the neofascist governments in Italy and Eastern Europe, the collapse of Brazilian democracy, and the crisis of legitimacy in Latin America, together with the persistence of corruption in most African political systems.

This lecture summarised the findings presented in Castell's latest book *Rupture. The crisis of liberal democracy* to be published by Polity Press. He focused on the election of Trump, and on Brexit, as key examples of current developments and also referred to the alternatives presented by social movements in Spain, France and Latin America, as different outcomes of the crisis of legitimacy.

Manuel Castells is University Professor and the Wallis Annenberg Chair in Communication Technology and









Streamed live at https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=5VNi3ywuchQ



# Who is Afraid of Stand-up Comedy? – Izuu Nwankwo, Senior Lecturer in Theatre Arts at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University and STIAS Iso Lomso fellow

Stand-up comedy in which an artist stimulates laughter through jokes, has become one of the most popular entertainment genres in Africa. Even though the continent now has comedians thrilling audiences with jocular enactments, academic scholarship on these is sparse, un(der)developed and yet to catch up with the practice. Nwankwo's study is a contribution to emerging enquiries on live comedy performances in Africa. What is known presently is that comedians work within a framed, no-offence liminal space that allows them to poke fun, ridicule, satirise and sometimes even insult. Herein is the paradox of joke-telling: every successful joke must, by definition, abuse. At worst, it is a choice between being amused and being incensed. Stand-up artists thus find themselves in the delicate circumstance of tiptoeing the thin line of abuse/amuse divide in all performances.

Top left: Olaf Zenker Below left: Manuel Castells Above: Izuu Nwankwo



Jian-Wei Pan

Nwankwo's work at STIAS entails studying stand-up artists and practices across the different regions of Africa – North, East, West and South – with a view to understanding how socio-cultural dynamics moderate/ modulate self-censorship and the tenor of jokes. This is informed by growing intolerance with jokes globally which is creating very restrictive conditions for humourists who are now often harangued and vilified for statements made in jest. It will aim to answer questions such as: What are the consequences of the world's heightening sensibilities, increasing insistence on political correctness, and burgeoning sense of offence in the face of ridicule? Are we at the cusp of losing laughter entirely, at least in public spaces?

Izuu Nwankwo is a senior lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Arts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Master of Arts degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan; and his Doctor of Philosophy, with specialisation in Performance Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Dr Nwankwo is a double recipient of the African Humanities Programme dissertation completion and post-doctoral research awards, a visiting scholar of the Centre for Teaching and Research in Postcolonial Studies, University of Liège, Belgium; and a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio residency. His research interests straddle different genres of performance arts especially humourinducing genres. His publications include the Igbo language translation of Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart titled, Ihe Aghasaa.

Making massive small change: Ideas, tools and tactics to build the urban society we all want – Kelvin Campbell, collaborative urbanist, chair of Smart Urbanism and the Massive Small Collective

## See: http://stias.ac.za/news/2018/10/making-massivesmall-change-a-vision-for-urban-development-stiaslecture-by-kelvin-campbell/

In an increasingly complex and changing world where global problems are felt locally, the systems we use to plan, design, and build our urban environments are doomed to failure. For three generations, governments the world over have tried to order and control the evolution of cities through rigid, top-down action. Yet, master plans lie unfulfilled, housing is in crisis, the environment is under threat, and the urban poor have become poorer.

The Massive Small project has evolved into a viable proposition. With the support of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and University College London, it has developed a range of ideas, tools and tactics that show practical ways of reforming our current topdown systems.

The talk introduced *Making Massive Small Change*, the first truly comprehensive sourcebook to come out of this project – published in September 2018. It showcases cities as they really are – deeply complex, adaptive systems. As such, it offers an alternative to our current highly mechanistic model of urban development. With roots in the work of great urban theorists such as Jane

Jacobs, Christopher Alexander, and E. F. Schumacher, *Making Massive Small Change* integrates this thinking with complexity theory, systems thinking and a scientific understanding of sustainability and resilience in cities. It sets out the enabling protocols, conditions, and behaviours that deliver Massive Small change in our neighbourhoods. It describes and illustrates the ideas, tools, and tactics being used to help engaged citizens, civic leaders, and urban professionals to work together to build a viable urban society, and shows how effective system change can be implemented.

Kelvin Campbell is former visiting professor in urban design at the University of Westminster and chairman of the Urban Design Group. He is now honorary professor at the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at the Bartlett, University College London, and teaches in the Masters in Sustainable Urban Development post-graduate programme at the University of Oxford.

In 2013, he received the Urban Design Group's Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the profession and was later awarded the Built Environment Fellowship by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851.

# From Einstein's Curiosity to New Quantum Technologies – Jian-Wei Pan, Director: Division of Quantum Physics and Quantum Information at the University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei

Quantum information science and technology are emerging and fascinating technologies formed by combining coherent manipulating of individual quantum systems and information technology. This enables secure quantum cryptography (quantum communication), superfast quantum computing, revealing the laws of complex physical systems (quantum simulation), and improving measurement precision (quantum metrology) to beat classical limits. This presentation highlighted progress with quantum communication, quantum computing, quantum simulation and quantum metrology, based on photons and atoms.

Tests are on-going, but already developed groundbreaking technologies for coherent manipulation of quantum systems offer elegant and feasible solutions to the increasing needs for computational power and information security. Based on state-of-the-art fibre technology and rich-fibre resources, the group has managed to achieve prevailing quantum communication with realistic devices in real-life situations. This includes developing practically useful quantum repeaters that combine entanglement swapping, entanglement purification, and efficient and long-lived quantum memory for ultra-long distance quantum communication.

Another goal is to attain global quantum communication via satellite. The group has spent the past decade

performing systematic ground tests for satellite-based quantum communication. This led to the successful launch of the Micius satellite which very recently was operated as a trustful relay for secure intercontinental communication by means of quantum key distribution (QKD) between between Beijing and Vienna over a distance of 7600 km.

Future prospects include building a global quantum communication infrastructure with satellite and fibre networks, quantum computing through coherent manipulation of more than 50 qubits to exceed the simulating power of the best current supercomputers, reaching 'quantum supremacy', and a Bell-test experiment with a human as observer at a distance of the order of one light-second.

During his career Jian-Wei Pan and his colleagues have achieved a seminal series of breakthroughs in quantum communication. His first quantum teleportation experiment reported in 1997 was selected by *Nature* as one of the 21 classic papers in physics published by *Nature* in 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Pan performed the first entanglement swapping experiment, later selected by *Science* magazine as one of the top-ten breakthroughs of 1998. These experiments established the fascinating scientific possibility of transferring quantum states of one object to another over arbitrarily long distances in a disembodied way, i.e. without physically transporting the object itself.

Pan has focused on developing experimental methods to coherently control multiple photons for the creation of multi-particle entanglement – a concept first recognised by Einstein, Schrödinger *et al.* and is at the heart of quantum physics.

Pan has authored more than 190 articles, including 14 in *Nature/Science* and 24 in *Nature Physics/Nature Photonics/Nature Nanotechnology*. His work in the field of quantum information and quantum communication has been selected by *Nature* in 'A celebration of Physics' (1999), as 'Feature of the year' (2012), and 'the science events that shaped the year' (2016), by *Science* as 'Breakthrough of the year' (1998), by the American Physical Society as 'The top physics stories of the year' (five times), by the Institute of Physics as 'Breakthrough of the year' or 'Highlights of the year' (six times), and by *Scientific American* as '2016 World Changing Ideas'.

Pan is an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the World Academy of Sciences. He serves as the Director of the CAS Centre for Excellence and Innovation in Quantum Information and Quantum Physics, and the Chief Scientist for the Quantum Science Satellite Project, and the Beijingto-Shanghai 2000-km Quantum Communication Backbone Project

Streamed live at: https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=taU3Rbyvsc4 **α** 

# **COLLOQUIA AND WORKSHOPS**

## Art and Social Transformation

The Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS) hosted an Arts and Social transformation colloquium at STIAS from 30 April – 3 May 2018.

This colloquium was organised by Prof. Michelle LeBaron, Peter Wall Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia and her colleagues Prof. Kim Berman (University of Johannesburg), Prof. Kitche Magak (Maseno University) and Prof. Janis Sarra (University of British Columbia). It featured a keynote address by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Program Point Sud

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the network Program Point Sud took place at STIAS in Stellenbosch from 11 - 13 October 2018. The meeting reviewed and discussed the activities undertaken in 2017/2018 and the collaboration between the partner institutions of the network. It also offered the opportunity to discuss important topics with regards to the aims and guiding principles of the programme; the mission and objectives of the network; the formalisation of memoranda of understanding as needed between partners; and, the elaboration of future collaborations and activities.

The meeting also welcomed a new member, the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana in Legon.

# **Two Chief Justices attend SASCA**

The  $6^{th}$  Stellenbosch Annual Seminar on Constitutionalism in Africa (SASCA) was held at STIAS from 4 – 6 September 2018. It was organised by the Institute for International and

"No Constitution can provide all the rules and regulations for society's functioning. It requires amendments, alignment and appropriate policies. The judiciary is the bedrock for protecting, interpreting and applying the Constitution but it is the executive arm of government that has to enact it."

David Maraga, Chief Justice of Kenya

Comparative Law in Africa (ICLA) of the University of Pretoria and STIAS, in partnership with the SARChI Chair on Multilevel Government, Law and Policy at the Dullah Omar Institute. University of the Western Cape and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Rule of Law Programme for sub-Saharan Africa. The theme was Democracy, elections and constitutionalism in Africa. A major highlight this year was the attendance of two Chief Justices - the Honourable David Maraga.

Chief Justice of Kenya and the Honourable Mogoeng Mogoeng, Chief Justice of South Africa.

In his presentation, Chief Justice Maraga said that Constitutions are only as good as their implementation and that this remains "aspirational in many parts of Africa. Without implementation and enforcement it's a Constitution without constitutionalism."

"No Constitution can provide all the rules and regulations for society's functioning," he added. "It requires amendments, alignment and appropriate policies. The judiciary is the bedrock for protecting, interpreting and applying the Constitution but it is the executive arm of government that has to enact it."

"Justices and judicial officials are stewards of the Constitution and must ensure that the Constitution gives effect to the values and aspirations of the citizens," he continued.

# "When all else fails, a fiercely independent judiciary is needed."

Mogoeng Mogoeng, Chief Justice of South Africa

He outlined the process that led to the annulment of the results of the 2017 presidential election in Kenya in which there were challenges with the electronic transfer of results from polling stations leading to problems in results verification and a lack of transparency.

He described African judiciaries as "often timorous" and pointed to the need for the judiciary as well as civil society groups and the media "to investigate violations, ensure they exercise their power and stand up and say 'No' when this is required".

His South African counterpart, Chief Justice Mogoeng continued with this theme calling for African countries to seek "best practices to facilitate the delivery of free and fair elections, and to implement those in Africa".

He described government as being about the people. "State functionaries are delegated to their positions by the public. National resources belong to the people. No one should be able to use the power delegated to them for personal benefit or score settling."

He also warned of the dangers of the financing aspects of elections. "Parties are dependent on deep pockets to fund campaigns," he said. "We need to drill down to understand who funds who and disclosure of such funding must be comprehensive." Speaking of the role of social media he described a worrying trend of judges being influenced by popular opinions. "We are not doing constitutional democracy any good by becoming judges on social media," he said.

"When all else fails," he added, "a fiercely independent judiciary is needed."

# Values and independence

Speaking in his introduction to the seminar, Charles Fombad of the ICLA and STIAS fellow, indicated that only 27% of African elections fall within the acceptable range of being free and fair but, as recent international events have shown, this is not just an African problem.

He also pointed out that even countries with strong Constitutions are challenged. "Zuma's tenure exposed the fragility of a highly acclaimed Constitution," he said. "We need clearly stated values and independent institutions to ensure the errors of the past are not repeated."

"The seminar is premised on concerns for the future of democratic elections and constitutionalism in Africa. Since the 1990s, multiparty elections have widely been regarded in Africa as the only way to constitute a legitimate democratic and accountable government," he continued. "Elections have been held regularly in most African countries. In spite of this, the prospects of such multiparty elections forming the basis for entrenching a culture of democratic governance, constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law have diminished. Whilst it is clear that support for democracy is hardening, the democratic quality of elections has steadily declined."

"The recent Zimbabwe elections have generally been described as reasonably free and fair. The same was said of the 2017 presidential elections in Kenya until the courts shocked the international community by proving that this was not the case! The critical issue then is how can we stabilise the rocky African constitutionalism boat through the stormy seas of authoritarian revival and prevent the democratic recession spiralling into a depression."

The seminar therefore sought to interrogate and reflect on ways to improve democracy in Africa. It was organised around 10 sessions with presentations based on five sub-themes:

- making multiparty democracy work in Africa;
- authoritarian multiparty democracy;
- enhancing the role of political parties in making democracy work;
- enhancing democratic quality through electoral processes; and,
- promoting inclusive and participatory democracy.

It was attended by academics and civil society representatives from 12 African countries as well as postgraduate students. The papers presented will be reviewed for possible publication in the fifth volume of the Oxford University Press series, *Stellenbosch Handbooks in African Constitutional Law.*  $\alpha$ 



The two Chief Justices – David Maraga and Mogoeng Mogoeng – were honoured with a special Ghanaian traditional attire, the Kente handwoven cloth, reserved for accomplished elders

# **NEWS FROM STIAS FELLOWS**

# Five-year funding for project on the global silicon cycle

Daniel Conley, professor of biogeochemistry at Lund University in Sweden and STIAS fellow, has been awarded EUR 3.3 million for a five-year project on the global silicon cycle. The funding comes from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation. The project is to be implemented in collaboration with researchers from Linnaeus University, also in Sweden. The researchers will investigate changes in the cycle of the silicon mineral over millions of years.

The cycling of silicon is of crucial significance to our planet's climate and for biological productivity. When silicon in the bedrock breaks down, the decomposition process uses carbon dioxide, which reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In seawater, silicon is crucial for how many diatoms can survive, as these phytoplankton need large amounts of silicon for their hard, porous cell walls, called frustules. Diatoms may seem tiny and inconspicuous, but they absorb around 53 million tons of carbon every day, in the form of carbon dioxide, through photosynthesis. This figure can be compared with human use of fossil fuels, which releases around 21 million tons of carbon per day. When the diatoms die and sink to the sea bed, they play an important role in taking carbon dioxide with them from the surface water down into the depths of the ocean.

In this project, Conley and his colleagues will investigate how the diatoms and other phytoplankton may have contributed to regulating silicon levels in the oceans over the past billion years.

"This knowledge will enable us to understand and predict how future environmental changes will affect both the climate and the oceans' productivity", said Conley.

# Prestigious NRF rating for STIAS fellow

A lifelong love of South African literature, and an attempt to share that love with the world, has earned University of the Western Cape (UWC) Extraordinary Professor of English David Attwell a prestigious A-rating from the South African National Research Foundation – an honour awarded only to those who do top-quality internationally respected and field-transforming work.

Attwell is only UWC's fifth A-rated researcher - and the only one with an A1 rating - and also the first outside the natural sciences. His main research interests are in postcolonial studies: postcolonial theory, critical formations in postcolonial countries, Anglophone African writing, South African literature, and theories and practices of cultural translation.

# 2019 Harvest Day celebrations at STIAS

On 16 February STIAS held its annual Harvest Day celebration where fellows and staff participated in grape picking, crushing, wine tasting and a traditional South African braai.

STIAS, which contains the Perold Vineyard, is situated on the historic Mostertsdrift, one of the first farms in the district, dating back to 1683 when Simon van der Stel awarded a tract of land on the banks of the Eerste River to Jan Mostert.

It was decided to plant a new vineyard on Mostertsdrift shortly after the establishment of STIAS. The vineyard covers 0,5 hectares and is planted with 966 vines. Pinotage was the obvious choice and the vines were planted on 2 October 2008. The 2013 vintage was the first to be released. Initially, several winemakers were used and various styles tested while the vines were settling in. After 10 years the vineyard is well established and, since 2017, has been managed by Lanzerac, which makes and markets the wine – called *Aliquid Novi*. Each year the fellows in residence as well as STIAS staff participate in harvesting the grapes. **\alpha** 

"This knowledge will enable us to understand and predict how future environmental changes will affect both the climate and the oceans' productivity"

David Attwell



STIAS fellows participating in Harvest Day 2018







# **BOOK LAUNCHES**

# Zakes Mda. Justify the enemy, Becoming human in South Africa.

University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

http://ukznpress.co.za/?class=bb\_ukzn\_ books&method=view\_books&global[fields][\_id]=531

This book is a collection of non-fiction by author Zakes Mda. It showcases his role as a public intellectual with the inclusion of public lectures, essays and media articles. Mda focuses on South Africa's history and the present, identity and belonging, the art of writing, human rights, global warming and why he is unable to keep silent on abuses of power.



Some of Mda's best-known novels include *Ways of Dying* (1995, MNet Book Prize); *The Heart of Redness* (2000, Commonwealth Writers' Prize: Africa, and *Sunday Times* Fiction Prize); *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002, one of the Top Ten South African books published in the Decade of Democracy); *The Whale Caller* (2005); *Cion* (2007); *Black Diamond* (2009); *The Sculptors of Mapungubwe* (2013); *Rachel's Blue* (2014); and *Little Suns* (2015, *Sunday Times* Literary Award).

Mda was born in Herschel in the Eastern Cape in 1948 and studied in South Africa, Lesotho and the United States. He wrote his first short story at the age of 15 and has since won major South African and British literary awards for his novels and plays. His writing has been translated into 20 languages. Mda is a professor of Creative Writing at Ohio University.



# *Skin we are in* by Nina Jablonski and Sindiwe Magona.

David Philip Publishers, Cape Town 2018, ISBN 978-1-4856-2608-4

The book, to be published in ten languages, is about the evolution of skin colour, and features a narrative about children, along with scientific text and illustrations. The main message is that skin colour is an evolutionary adaptation that is related only to the intensity of the sun. The book also highlights that skin colour is not related to other physical or behavioural attributes of a person.

The book launch involved a panel discussion between the authors and local scholars and activists in youth education and socialisation. It aimed to address the importance of getting children to think about and talk about the attributes of their bodies that have come to have inordinate social value.

Nina Jablonski, a biological anthropologist from Penn State University, is a permanent visiting fellow of STIAS and the co-convenor of a long-term STIAS project on the Effects of Race, the results of which will appear in a number of publications in the STIAS Series.

# Garment of Destiny: Zanzibar to Oxford: A Surgeon's Global Quest for Identity and the Ties that Bind by Abdallah Daar, 2018.

See: http://stias.ac.za/news/2018/11/one-coat-withmany-threads-stias-book-launch-by-abdallah-daar/

Inspired by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Dr Abdallah Daar, world-renowned transplant surgeon, scientist, bioethicist, global health expert, and true international, shares the stories of his remarkable life and career in *Garment of Destiny*.

Daar's story is joyful and inspiring, humorous and thoughtful, hopeful and triumphant - and, at times, harrowing. It is one man's honest attempt to answer the question "Who am I and what do I share with the rest of humanity?" Daar takes the reader on an absorbing journey to Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Zanzibar, South Africa, Idi Amin's Uganda, London, Oxford, the Middle East, the US, and finally, Canada, meeting slaves, royalty, great heroes, Nobel Prize winners, and mass murderers along the way. It is an exploration of the many facets of identity - and a plea to resist the forces that are wrenching people apart on racial, political and religious lines.

Abdallah Daar, a surgeon and professor of global health at the University of Toronto in Canada, is a permanent visiting fellow of STIAS and the convenor of a long-term STIAS project on the developmental origins of heath and disease (DOHaD) in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).  $\alpha$ 





# **NEWS FROM ISO LOMSO**

# Second Iso Lomso cohort announced

In 2018 STIAS announced its second cohort for the Iso Lomso Fellowships for Early Career African Researchers. The seven candidates joined the first cohort of five. The candidates are:

- Elieth Eyebiyi, PhDs from Université d'Abomey-Calavi (2012) and INRS Montréal (2016), based at LASDEL Benin (Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local), project: The temporalities of the Informality. The case of Benin-Nigeria Cross-border Fuel Smuggling.
- Claudia Gastrow, PhD from the University of Chicago (2014), based at the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies, University of Johannesburg, project: *Everyday States: Urban Life and Politics in Luanda, Angola.*
- Gibson Ncube, PhD from Stellenbosch University (2014), based at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Zimbabwe, project: *Bodies and/as Texts: Representing queer on screen in contemporary Africa.*
- Izuchukwu Nwankwo, PhD from Ibadan University (2014), based at the Department of Theatre Arts, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, project: A Study of the Interplay of Taboo Subjects and

Censorship in Determining the Limits of Humour/Insult in the Four Regions of Africa (North, South, West and East) and their Standup-up Jokes.

- Fara Raharimalala, PhD from Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 & Antananarivo University (2011), based at the Medical Entomology Unit, Institut Pasteur de Madagascar, project: Adaptation of mosquito vectors to insecticides used in the Southwest area of the Indian Ocean: implications for vector control.
- Debra Shepherd, PhD from VU University Amsterdam & Stellenbosch University, based at the Department of Economics, Stellenbosch University, project: A transdisciplinary analysis of the role of social identity on performance under social stratification and stigmatization.
- Mazin Sirry, PhD from the University of Cape Town, based at the Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of Medical Sciences and Technology Khartoum, project: *Predictive Computational Modelling* of Intramyocardial Biomaterial Therapies towards Personalised Care for Myocardial Infarction. α

# SELECTED RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY STIAS FELLOWS

A full list of books, book chapters and journal articles published by STIAS fellows is available on the STIAS website at www.stias.ac.za/publications. These outputs are also published in the STIAS Annual Reports – available at www.stias.ac.za/annual-reports.







# Baderoon, Gabeba. 2018. *The History of Intimacy* (1<sup>st</sup> ed). Cape Town: Kwela Books, NB Publishers.

The History of Intimacy is the fourth collection by award-winning poet Gabeba Baderoon. These poems render various intimacies and private hurts with eloquence and tenderness: the lost innocence of a child; a loved one in an ambulance; young passion across a man-made divide; a mother visiting her son in jail; elegies to an admired musician, mentor and poet; and, the reverberations of past injustices in District Six, the Cape Flats and Hangklip.

Baderoon treated STIAS fellows to an emotional and though-provoking reading of her poetry at STIAS on 20 September 2018.

## Dugard, John. 2018. Confronting Apartheid. Jacana Media. http://www.jacana.co.za/ book-categories/newreleases-65840/ confronting-apartheid-detail

Looking back over a long and distinguished career, John Dugard describes the work he undertook in defence of human rights by opposing the system of apartheid in South West Africa/Namibia and South Africa and, more recently, in occupied Palestine, which enforces a system that closely mirrors apartheid in South Africa. He shows how law was used by progressive lawyers in Namibia and South Africa to strike at the heart of Apartheid. The entrenchment of a system of discrimination and oppression in occupied Palestine is carefully examined in the context of Apartheid, but he ends on a note of hope that the international community. acting through civil society and the institutions of international law. will ensure that a just solution is found to this seemingly intractable problem.

Erk, Jan. 2018. Why Multi-Ethnic Belgium's Constitutional Court Keeps Mum: The Constitutionalization of Ethnicity, Judicial Review, and 'Passive Virtues'. In Constitutional Studies (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 101–128. https://constitutionalstudies. wisc.edu/index.php/cs/ article/view/20

Recent decades have witnessed the constitutionalisation of ethnicity in various multiethnic countries. From Spain to Ethiopia, this has mostly been along a federal path. This global trend has also coincided with what might

be called the judicialisation of politics and, in particular, the global spread of constitutional review. Multi-ethnic Belgium's federalisation process follows the first global trend but not the second. The constitutionalisation of ethnicity has happened without the Belgian constitutional court's involvement. This is thus the first international study of not when constitutional courts act but when they do not and why this matters. The article builds on the notion of 'passive virtues' coined in 1961 by Alexander M. Bickel to explain how the US Supreme Court had found ways to avoid. decline or delay judgment on controversial and essentially political matters upon which it was asked to rule. During Belgian federalisation. politics led and the constitutional court followed.

## Bachmann, Klaus. 2018. Genocidal Empires: German Colonialism in Africa and the Third Reich. Berlin: Peter Lang. http://doi.org/10.3726/ b13834

Between 1904 and 1907, German soldiers, settlers and mercenaries committed mass murder in Africa. Can this be considered the first genocide of the 20th century? Was it a forecast of the Third Reich's extermination policy in Central and Eastern Europe? This book provides the answer. Based on extensive archival and library research in Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa, Germany and Poland as well as on recent and up-to-date jurisprudence of international criminal tribunals, the renowned historian and political scientist Klaus Bachmann paints a new and surprising picture of the events and their legal significance, which many will find disturbing and provocative. It abolishes many well-established interpretations about German colonialism and its alleged links with the Third Reich and provides a new and intriguing contribution to post-colonial debates.

Bossuyt, Marc. 2018. The UN Optional Protocol on the Abolition of the Death Penalty. In Margaret M. DeGuzman and Diane Marie Amann (eds.), Arcs of Global Justice (Essays in Honour of William A. Schabas). pp. 109-115. Vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/

https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/ 9780190272654.003.0007

The drafting history of the Second Optional Protocol (1989) to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, is explained by the Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights entrusted with an analysis of the proposal to elaborate such a protocol. Special attention is given to the adoption of the text successively by the Sub-Commission and the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council, the Third Committee, and the General Assembly. Explanations are given on the possible reservation allowing an exception for 'a most serious crime of a military nature committed during wartime'. The Second Optional Protocol is also compared with regional instruments on the abolition of the death penalty, such as the 6<sup>th</sup> (1983) and 13<sup>th</sup> (2002) Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and the American Protocol aiming at the same abolition (1990).

## Penn, Claire, Watermeyer, Jennifer. 2018. *Communicating Across Cultures and Languages in the Health Care Setting.* London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. http://doi.org/10.1057/ 978-1-137-58100-6

This book offers a novel approach to understanding the complexities of communication in culturally and linguistically diverse healthcare

MICHELLE LeBARON

**LANIS SARRA** 





## Poli, Roberto (ed.). 2018. Handbook of Anticipation. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://link.springer.com/ referencework/10.1007/ 978-3-319-31737-3#about

Edited by Roberto Poli and containing several chapters by him and other STIAS fellows – Ilkka Tuomi, Mario Giampietro, Aloisius Louie, Edgar Pieterse, Winston Nagan, as well as Jannie Hofmeyr of the Centre for Studies in Complexity.



This Handbook presents

a state-of-the-art overview

develops anticipation from

both the theoretical and

applied points of view.

Via this comprehensive

overview of the research

anticipation is a serious

topic of research that can

and should be connected

research, perspectives and

orientation. The Handbook

Handbook makes clear that

on anticipation, this

to Futures Studies

uses the anticipatory

framework able both

fragmentation of the

and begin a process

aimed at progressively

closer integration, mutual

knowledge and dialogue

social sciences. It sets the

agenda for the field, helps

of age, and contributes to

changing the orientation

of the human and social

a new future-orientation.

The Handbook presents

research from fields such

humanities, engineering,

editorial board consists

of scholars from various

sociologists, economists,

scientists, designers and

statisticians, computer

game builders.

psychology, social sciences,

and computer science. The

sciences, such as futurists,

as: Biology, ecology,

dominant past-orientation to

sciences from their

futures studies to come

among the human and

viewpoint as a unifying

to stop the progressive

human and social sciences

of current research on

anticipation studies. It

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# STIAS BOOK SERIES

LeBaron, Michelle & Sarra, Janis (eds.). 2018. *Changing Our Worlds: Art as Transformative Practice.* Stellenbosch: African SUN MeDIA. http://doi.org/10.18820/ 9781928357872

Changing Our Worlds draws on the wisdom of African artists, theorists, educators and leaders. It profiles an array of transformative arts projects that, among other things, changed attitudes and behaviours toward HIV testing and prevention; helped rural citizens to design and build a new community centre; and, supported those with HIV/AIDS to strengthen their resilience.

The book reinforces the potency of arts practices to unsettle unjust orders, inspire new visions and embrace the human dignity that comes from acknowledging the interdependent world in which we live.

This publication is a result of STIAS's collaboration with the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies – the authors held two Wall Colloquia Abroad during the course of the project in 2015 and 2018. Jablonski, Nina & Maré, Gerhard (eds.). 2018. *The effects of race.* Stellenbosch: African SUN MeDIA. http://www.africansunmedia. co.za/Sun-e-Shop/ Product-Details/tabid/78/ ProductDetails/tabid/78/

The STIAS research theme Being Human Today explores the interrelated questions: What does it mean to be human? And: What is the nature of the world in which we aspire to be human? In the context of post-apartheid South Africa race and racism remain key references in both these questions. Why is this so, considering that the biological basis of race thinking has been refuted? Templates of race and racialism remain at the core of state policy in South Africa, periodic gross incidents of racism surface in public, and notions of the existence of races remain central to everyday thinking and discourse. This book is the result of the work of a



THE EFFE OF R

> group of leading thinkers and their in-depth conversations at STIAS during the winter of 2015 on the effects of race. Convened by evolutionary anthropologist Nina Jablonski and sociologist Gerhard Maré, the group included Niabulo Ndebele. Chabani Manganyi, Barney Pityana, Crain Soudien, Göran Therborn, Mikael Hjerm, Zimitri Erasmus and George Chaplin. The group reconvened annually through 2017. This is the first in a series of planned publications on their work. a

"I never thought I would be doing what I'm doing today. I'm delighted, though, because I can use all my detective skills in synthesising information together with my abilities in communication to talk to people about the evolutionary biology of humans, including health and social aspects."

# A passion for science

Nina Jablonski is a world-renowned anthropologist and palaeobiologist, known for her research into the evolution of skin colour in humans. She is an Evan Pugh University Professor at Pennsylvania State University, and has been a STIAS fellow since 2012 and one of the leaders of the *Effects of Race* project since 2014.

# **Early inspiration**

She spoke about her idyllic childhood in a rural area in upstate New York.

"I've never had big dreams or goals. I've done what seemed right at the time. I love learning and if I can help others to learn and get on the road to selfefficacy that's what counts." "My parents weren't farmers," she said, "but having grown up in the gritty industrial city of Buffalo they decided it would be better to raise a child in nature on a rural farm than in the city."

"Neither of them had been to university but they were committed to education and to freeing themselves of the constraints of American city life."

Jablonski credits their attitude towards education as well as the beautiful rural environment as the inspiration for her future study choices.

"There were fossils in the geological sediments on which the farm was located and when I went walking I occasionally found these. What I found so amazing – which my father explained to me – was that these were signs of past life from 350 million years ago. When you are four years old you don't know what a million means but it was mindboggling to me that these beautiful forms were evidence of life that had existed millions of years ago."

The young Jablonski was captivated and although her parents wanted her to be a doctor which was seen as the obvious "pathway to economic advancement and better social status" she became increasingly fascinated by evolution "the idea that there were fossils of the human lineage lit my mind on fire like nothing else".

"I realised I wanted to pursue something in the field of human evolution although I wasn't sure exactly what," she continued.

Fortunately she ended up pursuing graduate studies in an anthropology department that was very biologically oriented. "Within a few weeks I knew I had made the right decision," she said. "Everything I was studying was of fascination – comparative anatomy, fossils, population genetics, the basics of human evolution – it was right up my street."

She completed her PhD in primate paleontology – looking at the paleontology and comparative anatomy of a group of Old World monkeys including many represented in the South African fossil record.

"The beautiful thing about paleontology is that it is an empirical science," she said. "You are looking at observable materials, you make measurements, you quantify structures but you must use interpretations that don't provide direct evidence of the behaviour or environment. You make inferences based on supporting evidence from other fields. The reconstruction of past life is a detective story and I absolutely love putting together disparate evidence to come up with a cohesive picture of what happened."

"If you were to ask me what my ultimate question is – the one that keeps me ticking every day – it would be what happened in our evolutionary past. What did we look like, what was life like for us, what environmental and social influences were there, how did we treat one another, what did it feel like to be an early member of our lineage?"

Jablonski still works in primate paleontology but has branched out to look more broadly at human evolution.

"This happened by accident – no grand plan," she said. "Sometimes the not-so-random walks we take end up being the most fulfilling parts of your life."

Whilst working at the University of Western Australia her focus also turned specifically to the evolution of skin colour.

"I had been asked to give a lecture on skin to human biology students. I started digging around and was amazed by how little was known. Skin colour is the most visible aspect of the human body and we didn't know much about it. The science wasn't very good. I was shocked."

She then heard a talk about the biochemistry of the skin and realised that dark skin pigmentation protected key biochemical pathways in the body via the blood vessels and that this was the reason for the evolution of darker pigmentation.

"I also realised it was related to the intensity of the sun – the stronger the sun, the more protective pigmentation was needed. It was an exciting insight."

Working with her husband, George Chaplin, who was adept in using geographical information systems, and being able to access satellite data was a major step forward.

"We were able to put an empirical foundation on what had only been sketchily known. We were able to show a clear correlation between the intensity of sunlight and skin darkness." This set her on what she describes as "an accelerating trajectory of increasingly interesting and gratifying research and public outreach".

"Skin colour has enormous relevance to people's health and social interactions," she continued. "It's a trait of the human body that has had a disproportionate importance in human social interactions."

"Races, as we understand them, were created as social entities with biological labels attached – for purposes of artificially dividing humanity."

# **Reaching children**

And Jablonski is particularly passionate about public outreach and getting this message to children.

"We can have bigger impact on children," she said. "Make a difference in how they think about themselves."

"When kids understand that skin colour is a biological fact related to evolution which was used to create categories called race they come to their own conclusions about the fallacy of race."

This passion has led to the development of the children's book *Skin we are in* which Jablonski wrote with co-author Sindiwe Magona.

"If we cannot address race thinking in childhood then we have lost the battle – it's hard to dislodge racial thinking once it's part of the subconscious," she said. "The principles of skin colour evolution are easy to understand. Children understand the strength of the sun and that if you have more or less of the 'sunscreen' melanin this reflects the environment in which your ancestors lived – it's simple. When kids get it they look at you and ask 'What's the fuss about?'."

"It's fantastic when children interrogate scientific information to shed light on their own lives. Maybe it even spurs them to be scientists themselves."

She admitted though that it remains contentious turf "because race is also positive – people self-identify with shared customs, language, foods, ways of being. I'm not saying people should divorce themselves from their identity but rather to recognise that the constructions foist upon us centuries ago are erroneous."

Her passion brought her to the STIAS *Effects of Race* project following an approach by STIAS when Stellenbosch University presented her with an honorary degree in 2010.

"Race is the frame through which we look at modern South Africa," she said. "It's impossible to look at South Africa without considering race and the legacy of Apartheid. South Africa is trying to re-invent itself and re-imagine its future as a beautiful rainbow nation but it has this lump caught in its throat and that is the legacy of years of social deformation caused by Apartheid which enforced rules about how people should behave and where they should live, rules which have left a lasting imprint from which South Africa is struggling to escape."

"This project is part of the process of trying to figure out how we can get out of the mess."

"We are unified by the wonderful thing that we are all humans. We share genetic, cultural and behavioural similarities, similar motivations, cognitive machinery, everything. We are dissimilar in so few ways, it's ridiculous. The fact that we have chosen to magnify those tiny differences is something we must recognise as a crime – but one we must admit to and get over."

# Facing the future challenges

"I love being a scientist, but as I get older and reflect on the world I want to do some good," she said. "It sounds hackneyed but I want to channel my energy and knowledge to allow people to come together to overcome the challenges that lie ahead – climate change, water and food shortages, movements of people because of climatic and political difficulties. We have some really big fish to fry."

"We have diminished the effects of natural selection on the human body but not eradicated it – evolution can still cut us hard in terms of disease susceptibility, evolution of new viruses, antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Evolution will bite when we least expect it."

"When you think about the future you think about your grandchildren, your students – we have to do better to ensure there is a physical world left as well as a social world in which we want to interact with each other."

"I guess I'm a perpetual student. I love learning new stuff," she concluded. "I enjoy being a human and having the privilege of doing what I'm doing. I've had an incredible life."  $\alpha$ 

"When you think about the future you think about your grandchildren, your students – we have to do better to ensure there is a physical world left as well as a social world in which we want to interact with each other."

# Where are they now?

# Catching up with a few STIAS fellows

# Ben Cousins - first STIAS fellowship 2011

Prof. Ben Cousin's currently holds the DST/NRF Chair in Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) and is Senior Professor in the Institute for Poverty Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape.

In 2013 he received an inaugural Elinor Ostrom Award. His research is interdisciplinary, drawing on theories, concepts and insights from anthropology, sociology, development studies, political studies, history, economics, law and environmental studies. His work focuses on the political economy of agrarian change as well as the anthropology of law and land tenure.

Cousins has worked closely with government departments and non-governmental organisations to formulate new land policies, and has provided critiques of government policies and advocated alternative policies. He publishes regularly in the popular media and is currently rated by South Africa's National Research Foundation as a researcher who enjoys considerable international recognition for the high quality and impact of his recent research outputs. He has published widely and has edited or co-edited 11 books.



# Kogila Moodley – first STIAS fellowship 2011

Kogila Moodley is Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She was born in South Africa and completed her studies at the University of Natal, Michigan State University and the University of British Columbia. She was the first holder of the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education, former President (and present member of the Board) of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Ethnic, Racial and Minority Relations, and Board member of Ethnic and Racial Studies (London).

In 2016 her book *Imagined Liberation: Xenophobia, Citizenship and Identity in South Africa, Germany and Canada,* co-authored with Heribert Adam was published in the STIAS series. It looks at the causes of xenophobia in South Africa, and asks what hatred of foreigners in South Africa says about the state of democracy in this country 20 years after its inception in 1994.

Adam is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Most of the research and writing for their book took place during visits to STIAS from 2011 to 2013.

# Ingrid Winterbach – first STIAS fellowship 2011

Ingrid Winterbach is a renowned South African author and artist who has been publishing novels for the past three decades. Her many awards and accolades include the Hertzog, M-Net and Old Mutual Prizes. Her 2012 novel *Die aanspraak van lewende wesens*, was awarded every single literary award available in Afrikaans: WA Hofmeyr Prize (2013), Hertzog Prize for prose (2013), NB-Uitgewers Groot Romankompetisie (2012), M-Net Prize (2013) and the University of Johannesburg Prize (2013).

Winterbach has been a writer in residence at CalArts (California Institute of the Arts), a fellow at STIAS and has done a residency as visual artist at the Ampersand Foundation in New York.

Her novels have been translated into Dutch and French.



Imagined Liberation: Xenophobia, Citizenship and Identity in South Africa, Germany and Canada (STIAS, 2016) was co-authored by Kogila Moodley

# Siamon Gordon – first STIAS fellowship 2012

Prof. Siamon Gordon is Emeritus Professor at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology at Oxford University.

Gordon studied medicine at the University of Cape Town and life sciences at the Rockefeller University, New York. Since 1976 he has been at the Dunn School of Pathology at the University of Oxford where his group has studied various aspects of macrophage immunobiology.

His research interests include the role of macrophages and their receptors in innate and acquired immunity.

# Mia Swart – first STIAS fellowship 2012

Mia Swart is research director of the Democracy and Governance Unit of the Human Sciences Research Council. Her research focus is on transitional justice, international criminal law and comparative constitutional law. She is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, a non-resident fellow at Brookings Doha Center and a fellow of the Helen Suzman Foundation. In 2012, she worked at the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law in London.

Her work has been cited by South African courts as well as by the International Criminal Court. Her co-edited book *The Limits of Transition: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission 20 Years After* was published in 2017.



Mia has consulted for the United Nations Development Programme in Palestine and for Amnesty International in southern Africa. She chairs the Complementarity Committee of the International Law Association and regularly contributes to the media in South Africa and internationally.

# Athol Fugard – Artist in resident and STIAS permanent fellow from 2012

Fugard is a South African playwright, novelist, actor and director. He is best known for his political plays opposing apartheid and for the 2005 Academy Award-winning film of his novel *Tsotsi*, directed by Gavin Hood.

Fugard was an adjunct professor of playwriting, acting and directing in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of California, San Diego as well as the Wells Scholar Professor at Indiana University.

He is the recipient of countless awards, honours, and honorary degrees, including the 2005 Order of Ikhamanga in Silver "for his excellent contribution and achievements in the theatre" from the government of South Africa. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

His most recent awards include a Tony Award for lifetime achievement in 2011 and the Japan Art Association's Praemium Imperiale prize for theatre/film in 2014.

# Reinette Biggs – first STIAS fellowship 2012

Prof. Biggs holds a DST/NRF South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience. She is an NRF P-rated researcher, and holds a joint appointment in the School of Public Leadership at Stellenbosch University, and the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University in Sweden. She coordinates the Southern African Program on Ecosystem Change and Society (SAPECS), a network of researchers and practitioners working on social-ecological systems in the southern African region.

Biggs' research aims to advance theory and understanding of complex social-ecological systems, specifically how to build resilience to deal with uncertainty, surprise and ongoing environmental and social change. A specific focus of her research is regime shifts – large, often abrupt, long-lasting changes in socialecological systems that can have dramatic implications for human economies and societies. Biggs aims to develop practical theory, methods and insights that can contribute to facilitating transitions to more sustainable futures in southern Africa.

She has authored or co-authored over 30 scientific articles and 20 book chapters.  $\alpha$ 

The Limits of Transition: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission 20 Years After (2017) was co-edited by Mia Swart







# In memoriam

STIAS is sad to announce the passing of two fellows – Claire Penn who passed away in July 2018 and Christian van den Broeck who passed away in February 2019. We extend our condolences to their families and colleagues.  $\alpha$ 

Claire Penn (left) and Christian van der Broeck (right)

# CONTACT DETAILS

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