

NEWSLETTER OF
THE STELLENBOSCH
INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED STUDY

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A STIAS INITIATIVE

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ECONOMIC
SCIENCES

In this issue

2022 | 7



Cover image and above:
Nobel in Africa flags out to
welcome attendees to the
launch festivities and the
Physics symposium
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Preface

Man of Art and Science

Interview with Jonathan Kingdon

An introverted productive academic

A conversation with Gibson Ncube

A curious scholar

What motivates Aretha Phiri

News roundup

STIAS public lecture series

In the News

Gathering Africa and the World around the Nobel fireplace

Nobel in Africa launch

Selected publications

1 About STIAS

2 The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study is situated on the historic Mostertsdrift farm in the heart of Stellenbosch.

6 It is a place where top researchers and intellectual leaders are provided a creative space for the mind and are encouraged to find innovative and sustainable solutions to issues facing the world and, in particular, the country and the continent of Africa. STIAS provides the opportunity for high-level research and intellectual development in an international context.

11

14

18

21

Preface

It's hard to believe we are already near the end of 2022 – our activity-filled year flew by with a fascinating programme of weekly fellows' seminars, public lectures, conferences and meetings not to mention the much-anticipated Nobel in Africa Initiative launch which had the staff and facility working at full strength.

Our Fellows and colleagues continue to impress with the quality of their outputs and the honours and accolades they amass – some of which are highlighted in this issue.

In this Spring/Summer 2022 Newsletter we delve into the stories behind the stories with detailed interviews with some of our fellows. First, an interview with artist, scientist and uniquely creative mind – Jonathan Kingdon who celebrated his 87th birthday while in residence in the first semester. We catch up with two of our younger fellows – already Iso Lomso veterans – Aretha Phiri and Gibson Ncube to find out more about their backgrounds and about some of their exciting career moves since the fellowship.

Also in this Issue, we hosted the meeting of Some Institutes for Advanced Study (SIAS), a consortium of 10 partner institutes. STIAS joined SIAS in 2018 as the first Southern Hemisphere partner, and we were delighted to be able to host the hybrid group meeting for the first time to discuss challenges and opportunities.

Of course, the undoubted highlight in this period was the launch of the Nobel in Africa Initiative. The second semester started on a high note as we celebrated the 'soft' launch and brand reveal in August. The official launch of the Nobel in Africa Initiative on 25 October was a triumphant celebration bringing together the local and international donor community, friends of STIAS and scientists from across the globe. We bring you the full story on pages 18 to 20.

The launch was followed by an inspiring public lecture by STIAS's most-recent Nobel Laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021. This public lecture was held in collaboration with the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) (<https://stias.ac.za/2022/11/reminding-us-to-read-reread-and-hope-public-lecture-by-abdulrazak-gurnah>).

As we head into the hot summer months in South Africa, we wish you some well-earned rest and relaxation, and the prospect of a glorious new year ahead with an exciting, ever-full and always edifying calendar! α

Edward Kirumira, Director of STIAS



Man of art and science

“Through his art and his scientific observations (although the two were never separate), Jonathan Kingdon has had a profound impact on natural history, particularly through his field guides for African mammals and his landmark book on biogeography, Island Africa.”

“The division between the arts and sciences which education seems built around today – which only really became ingrained in the nineteenth century – is artificial. Both are deeply creative and both are thoroughly analytical ... Kingdon’s science has never been separate from his art.” – Evolution as Inspiration. Jonathan Kingdon, Published by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, 2019.

One of STIAS’ senior fellows, Jonathan Kingdon is an artist, scientist, and all-round deeply creative mind. In an interview he revealed some of his inspiration.

“Swahili was my first language and my mother lamented that I knew more Swahili than English when I was four years old.”

“I was home schooled until I was eight and a half,” he said. “My mother taught me to draw and paint for two or three years before she taught me to read and write. That was very significant in determining how my mind works. I have a strong preference for taking things in visually and finding some form of graphic expression.”

“The three figures who shaped me most were my mother, first and foremost. She was enterprising, talented, with flair and imagination, and a huge sense of humour. She would sit down and produce a book – write, illustrate and, in one instance, make the plates herself to print and publish. She printed it in the bathroom with wet towels hanging all over the place to stop the ink drying before it got on to the page. An idea finding its way into words and images. Little things like that stand out from my childhood.”

“Also my father – a very conscientious, good father who was a principled and scientifically minded man – a scientific technician, if you like.”

“And not least, Saidi Abisa – who was my carer for the first seven years of my life. He took his job of being my big brother very seriously, constantly reprimanding me for being insensitive to somebody or anything like that. He was a moral leader in some respects but his morality was rather interesting. I remember him saying – ‘If you have to choose between being a slaver and a slave, it’s better to be a slaver’. And he was talking from experience because his grandfather would have been a slaver. These things were real then. We tend to forget how recent these things are.”

Kingdon painted a graphic picture of an ideal childhood in remote areas in Tanganyika (later renamed Tanzania), East Africa where he was born in 1935.

His great uncle – Hal Hignell – farmed ostriches in the Karoo in the early 1900s, was a friend of Jan Smuts (“a fitness freak like Smuts – they did competitive hiking in the bush”) and by the time World War I broke out, had moved to Kenya from where he joined the army and was one of Smut’s officers in the assault on German East Africa. When the war ended and the British Administration took over, he became a District Officer/Commissioner and recruited Kingdon’s father to come out to East Africa in 1928.

His father also served as District Officer, a position that involved being moved from post to post in an attempt “to stop corruption and prevent close relationships with the local bigwigs”.

“I grew up as the only white child in a black community,” said Kingdon. “I grew up believing that everybody loved me. If you believe everybody loves you, you have a great affection for everybody who loves you. Africans have always seemed to me to be the most welcoming. The only time in my life I’ve been beaten up was by a white gang in London – Teddy Boys – a product of the British class system, working-class people who resented what they saw as the elite. That breeds violence as much in England or America as it does anywhere else.”

A childhood spent on the move meant that there wasn’t time to get used to a place and decide that’s the way the world works. “You were constantly being challenged to reconfigure and that’s what I’ve been doing all my life, reconfiguring what’s worth investigating, what’s worth looking at.”

“We lived in every kind of habitat you can imagine,” said Kingdon. “In mountains, at the coast, alongside Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika, in rainforests, in deserts. I grew up as a nomad like my parents. Swahili was my first language and my mother lamented that I knew more Swahili than English when I was four years old.”

Always learning

Both his parents started out as teachers.

“So I grew up with the ambition to be a teacher and a strong correlate of that was always to be learning – because you can’t teach unless you’ve learnt. Learning became the central discipline of my life in order to be a better teacher. Learning, in my case, includes trying to understand the structure of animals and plants, and the natural world, space and time.”

His mother was also a professional artist. “She managed to immediately get involved with the *Illustrated London*



“I’d like to influence education in Africa. I’ve been an ambassador for education in Africa all my life. My ambition would be to see a complete reconfiguring of what education is.”

Kingdon treated STIAS to a mini-exhibit of some of his art works while in residence.

News, as well as a big pictorial newspaper published in Nairobi,” he explained, “producing illustrated articles for both. She also illustrated school textbooks aimed at Africa – so basically Africanising them by showing African families.”

Of course, formal education was a necessity and meant going to England where Kingdon found himself initially in Chichester and later in Oxford at his father’s school where the art teacher was the son of the historian Arnold Toynbee. He encouraged the young Kingdon to pursue art and after school he went to the Royal College of Arts in London.

With his studies completed in 1959, the opportunity came to return to East Africa as a lecturer at Makerere University in Uganda. “I knew the country well. We often went there on holiday. We thought of it as East Africa not really as separate countries. Uganda was as much home to me as Tanganyika was.”

Kingdon was appointed as the first lecturer in graphics and book production but after a year the position of lecturer in painting and art history became vacant and he moved from graphics to painting. “I taught everything – etching, lithography, book production, silkscreen, art history, sculpture, painting – the works, basically.

“I was fortunate that my first boss knew that he knew less than me about the place we were both in,” he explained. “He was a Brit but had come straight from Rhodes University to be professor of fine art at Makerere. He gave me a free hand. So as a 25-year-old I was treated with respect rather than feeling I had to fit in under a hierarchy. I was an autonomous, young man which bred a certain kind of self-confidence.”

Kingdon also became involved with the Zoology Department because of his interest in animals and plants. “I happened to know more than most of the people in the department so I joined in on their fieldtrips and gave lectures on the ecology of animals and plants in Uganda.”

“I was very lucky in my parents, my background and my first boss. I took over from him after about 10 years as professor. I was also on the board of the Uganda Museum and eventually chairman of trustees. So I got involved in museums and museology. Museums remain a passion. I’ll go a long way to see a good museum.” Whilst at STIAS, Kingdon gave a talk at the West Coast Fossil Park, which he described as the “most inspiring museum I’ve seen in South Africa. There is no other place remotely like it anywhere on earth that I know of.”

Historical events did, however, intervene in Kingdon’s journey. In 1971 Idi Amin took over Uganda in a military coup. “I stayed for a couple of years over that period – it was hair-raising. I actually met Amin – spent about an hour and a half in his company – before he became a dictator.”

Kingdon had started work on what would become a seven-volume enterprise – originally intended to be three – *East African Mammals – an Atlas of Evolution in Africa* – cited in 2000 by *American Scientist* as one of the 100 books that shaped 20th century science. This led to his appointment in 1974 as research associate at Oxford in the Zoology Department. “I’ve been there ever since – coming up for 50 years.”

“I remember always being shocked at the levels of ignorance that surrounded me. There was no value given to the indigenous animals, flora or fauna in East Africa. The only value was whether it would attract tourists. The only way I could get a book like that published at that time was to do the first inventory of the mammals of East Africa. That’s how I sold the idea.”

While the seven-volumes, his other books, as well as lecturing across the world made Kingdon a globally known academic, he pointed to his 2013 exhibition at the Museo delle Scienze in Trento, Italy as a more popular highlight. “This was an amazing exhibition. A quarter of a million people saw it. I think my biggest fan club is Italian.”

His links to Italy also have a personal angle as his first wife was Italian and therefore his five children are half Italian and he lives there currently from where he commutes.

“But staying alive is probably the biggest achievement of my life,” he laughed. And as Kingdon celebrated his 87th birthday while at STIAS, reflection on his remaining goals seemed appropriate.

“That’s easy,” he said. “I’d like to influence education in Africa. I’ve been an ambassador for education in Africa all my life. My ambition would be to see a complete reconfiguring of what education is. The first





most important thing is to give Africans pride in being inhabitants of the continent that gave rise to *Homo sapiens* – our species – developing pride in the privilege of being alive on the continent of origin.”

“The first great civilisation that flourished was African – Ancient Egypt – a culture that lasted over 3000 years. Nothing can compete with that. But people don’t give it credence, they are not taught about it. If you value Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Chinese civilisations then you should also treat Ancient Egypt with respect. It was the longest-lasting, most consistent and wholly African civilisation ever. People should know about it.”

Creativity and curiosity

“Of course, I believe in the three Rs,” he added, “but too much emphasis is given to making people literate so that they can pay taxes and be docile employees. I’d like to see education tending more towards creativity – in the context of curiosity.”

“I’d like to see a lot more emphasis given to the environment and to human origins in education at every level. It implies that we must have a biological basis for education as a top priority. As an adjunct to that – every school should have a national/school park where students can be taken to see frogs spawning, fish swimming or birds nesting – even in cities. That is something we could achieve.”

“People are grossly ignorant about their place in nature,” he continued. “We are all animals – no different from a

mouse, gorilla or chicken. We all eat, excrete, copulate, do all the things that other animals do to continue as a species. That’s the context in which I see education. I’m a radical when it comes to the objectives and strategy we should adopt.”

“With my STIAS project I hope to see much more attention given to corridors of indigenous vegetation. The barbaric destruction of indigenous vegetation by industrial agriculture in this country is horrifying and shameful. If you drive up the West coast you see Kansas not South Africa. Every farmer should be required to leave a certain percentage of his land in its original state or to rewild.”

“Where we are sitting is the Renosterveld – when people first came here it would have been swarming with rhino. They were a highly adaptive animal, adaptive to live off this vegetation, instead they were the first thing they got rid of. There is less than 0.5% of the Renosterveld left.”

“I would like to see more respect given to the communities of plants that evolved here and more knowledge about them. This is the greatest conglomeration of indigenous plants anywhere in the world and can be traced back to 66 million years ago.”

“I give huge praise to the people who run STIAS. I’ve enjoyed my time here enormously,” he concluded. “These are some of the most marvellous people I’ve ever met. I feel a deep sense of obligation to everything they have done to make this into a platonic ideal.”

“In terms of my emotional identity I remain an East African but in terms of my intellectual identity my home is Oxford – now I have an extended family here at STIAS.” α

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An introverted productive academic

Earlier this year Gibson Ncube presented a STIAS public lecture on his three-year Iso Lomso project looking at representations of queer bodies in contemporary African film. It was the culmination of his residencies at STIAS as part of the second Iso Lomso cohort.

The project examined how queer African bodies projected on screen articulate the intersection between atypical temporalities, race, gender and sexuality. Ncube set out to focus on the body as a site of knowledge-making in understanding queerness where gender and sexual identity are not just performed but also constituted and embodied; as well as to look at the differences in how queer bodies are represented between North and sub-Saharan Africa.

“I centre the body as a site of understanding queerness,” explained Ncube. “The filmed queer body is invested with multiple, often intersecting, discourses and narratives. The queer body is inscribed with more than just desire, eroticism and sexuality. I also focus on the (dis)continuities in how queer bodies are represented. Through an analysis of selected films, I show the particularities of queer representation in different parts of the African continent.”

The resulting book will be published very soon. During his Iso Lomso fellowship Ncube also moved from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe to the Department of Modern Foreign Languages at Stellenbosch University and spent an unexpected six months at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina during the COVID pandemic.

Although the forced stay in the US was challenging, it proved to be very productive.

“I was supposed to be at the Center for three months but then the pandemic started and my stay became a six-month one. The first few months were very good as I was able to work from the Center and discuss my ideas with other fellows. But when the Center closed down, I worked from my apartment,” said Ncube. “Most of the fellows in residence were Americans so when the Center

closed, they went to their home states. It was difficult – a challenge to stay mentally and physically healthy whilst focused to remain indoors – I wasn’t used to being alone with my thoughts and just my books and writing for days on end! Although I am introverted, I felt the need for contact with other people. Workwise though, it was very productive.”

His stay in the US specifically gave him access to materials not easily accessible in South Africa. “Being able to watch films that are not available on the commercial circuit or streaming platforms was very helpful for my work,” he said.

Luckily also is the fact that Ncube is a bit of an introvert with reading, watching movies and soaps and comic books being major interests.

“I was never sporty,” he said. “My hobby was reading – specifically comic books. It still is. As a child my favourite was Tintin and then, of course, the Marvel Comics. I’m also a fan of the movies. Black Panther is probably my favourite Marvel character.”

Ncube grew up in Zimbabwe – in the second-largest city Bulawayo – where most of his family still reside. One of three children, his father was a policeman and his mother a stay-at-home mum.

“I had a very good childhood. Having a dad who was a policeman sometimes made things very strict at home but everything was okay. When I was growing up in the late 80s and early 90s Zimbabwe wasn’t too bad. It started to change around 2000 especially regarding the economy. This was around the time I started my undergraduate studies at the University of Zimbabwe.

Fostering a love for language

He attended Milton High – the government boys’ school in Bulawayo where his love for French literature and language was nurtured.

“I was passionate about French and enjoyed it at high school. I love languages generally but French was different to anything else I was learning. The novelty captured my attention and, of course, teaching it is what I do now.”

His teachers and parents also encouraged his interest in art – specifically drawing – which he still pursues when time allows.

He studied French and Spanish at the University of Zimbabwe completing a BA Hons and MPhil in French. In 2012 he moved to Stellenbosch University to do a PhD in French and Francophone Literature with a thesis focused on non-normative sexualities in North African literature. Ncube has since accumulated a substantial

“The filmed queer body is invested with multiple, often intersecting, discourses and narratives. The queer body is inscribed with more than just desire, eroticism and sexuality.”

publications record and is the 2021 Mary Kingsley Zochonis Distinguished Lecturer (African Studies Association UK & Royal African Society); an Alumnus of the African Humanities Programme Postdoctoral Fellowship (American Council for Learned Societies); sits on the Editorial Boards of *Nomina Africana*, the *Journal of Literary Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of African Studies* and the *Governing Intimacies in the Global South* Book Series by Manchester University Press. He is Assistant Editor of the *South African Journal of African Languages* and Co-Convenor of the Queer African Studies Association (2020-2022). He holds a Y1 rating from the National Research Foundation of South Africa.

“My parents strongly encouraged me to study. I think my father would have preferred me to do something more practical like engineering – he wasn't too happy with my choices at the start. But I think they are proud of what I've achieved.”

The Iso Lomso fellowship gave him the opportunity to expand his PhD work from literature to film. The Graduate School in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch shared the fellowship call with the alumni of the Graduate School scholarship programme. “I decided to try my luck,” he said. “I was surprised to be awarded the fellowship.”

“I found the contact with senior professors who were very open to sharing their ideas and also the opportunity to speak to other young academics from other disciplines extremely useful. Having dedicated time to concentrate on your research is amazing as well as sharing your work and receiving constructive feedback.”

His research interests have expanded into comparative literatures, queer and gender studies as well as postcolonial African cultural studies. He has started working on a new project on the sexualisation of women's bodies in the marketing of fast-food, a project he wants to culminate into a book.

But the solitary pursuits of writing go alongside a busy teaching schedule and speaking of his teaching work at Stellenbosch since his appointment in December 2021, he said: “It's going well. I can't complain. Teaching is cool. I enjoy it. It re-energises you. As someone who is introverted, it's a bit of a performance that you switch on and off.”

“I'm working towards becoming a full professor. That's one of my goals. It would be nice to come back to STIAS as a professor.” **α**

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A curious scholar

“I take scholarship seriously, but I consider myself a curious scholar. I’m not an ‘expert’ in my field. I continue to learn – that’s what I love to do. There’s still so much to learn,” said Aretha Phiri of the Department of Literary Studies in English at Rhodes University.

Phiri was one of the inaugural cohort of Iso Lomso scholars who took up residency from 2017. Since then her academic career has gone from strength to strength with recent highlights including her appointment as Associate Professor and the news that she has been awarded a prestigious Kluge fellowship by the US Library of Congress. We interviewed Phiri for the first issue of the STIAS newsletter in 2018 and decided it was time for a catch up.

“STIAS sent out a notice about the Kluge Fellowship,” said Phiri. “It was a fantastic opportunity. During my fellowship I had been in residency at the National Humanities Center and, while there, visited the Toni Morrison papers at Princeton University as well as the Library of Congress to do more digging for my research on Morrison. At the LoC I happened upon the Ralph Ellison’s Papers and decided to do some digging there as well because there are interesting connections between him and Morrison. Because I am interested in him as a writer, I teach him at Honours level and had been invited to give a paper at a conference in Oxford which was developed into a chapter for a publication called *Global Ralph Ellison*. I thought I’d kill two birds with one stone and look at both Morrison and Ellison at the same time.”

However, Phiri only had four days – just enough to light the flame to continue this line of questioning regarding Ellison’s relationship with and continued relevance to Africa generally and to South Africa in particular.



“What excites me most about this research is that I’m not trying to ‘make’ an argument. Although I’m expanding the perceived scope of his influence which is typically oriented towards the ‘global North’, I’m primarily interested in learning more about Ellison in relation to Africa and South Africa and *vice versa*.”

“When I saw the Kluge ad, I decided to take it further and to hone in on my interest in Ellison. I also received lots of encouragement from the book editors.”

The John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress in Washington offers fellowships in the humanities and social sciences with a focus on interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research with relevance to contemporary challenges. The fellowships are offered for up to 12 months and give the recipients full access to all the repositories of the Library. Phiri will be in Washington from December 2022 to March 2023.

“The four months will be about plugging my way through anything and everything I can find about Ellison,” she said. “On my previous visit I glimpsed prospects but there wasn’t time to follow through. So it will be me and Ralph Ellison for four months!”

“The Library is an institutional powerhouse in America. So I’m excited and gratified to have the opportunity to go back.”

The fellowship also allows access to US Senators and political figures.

“I haven’t thought about that part yet but I teach American literature and have a research interest in American culture so it would be interesting to meet people in the political sense,” she said.

“An award-winning author and formidable intellectual, Ellison has an influence that goes beyond literature. He’s seen as a cultural icon and politically influential. Barak Obama, for example, lists *The Invisible Man* as one of his top reads. Maybe I’ll get to meet Obama and chat about the novel,” she laughed.

Not even the possibility of the cold US midwinter dampens Phiri’s enthusiasm. “Washington is a fantastic city – it’s fascinating culturally and artistically, it’s also cosmopolitan and very walkable. I enjoyed being there and look forward to being back again, whatever the weather! This is a lifetime opportunity. One thing that COVID has demonstrated is how fickle things are. So I won’t be putting this off under the illusion that there might be another occasion.”

African aspects

Phiri’s research on Ellison’s relatedness to Africa and South Africa extends his ambivalent relationship with black America to include his somewhat ambivalent relationship with the continent. “There are varied hints at the sense of his alienation from African politics and social issues. But *The Invisible Man* is read as profoundly influential, especially to the anti-imperialist and pan-Africanist decolonisation movements that characterised the African continent from the 1950s onwards.

Of particular interest to me is Ellison’s influence on the South African nation within the context of its efforts to reshape itself and its place in the continent, post-apartheid and within the contemporary global challenges of ethno-nationalist sentiment, of which South Africa is not exempt. I’m interested in what this incongruous relationship suggests about the prospects in the country for a decolonised, transformed non-racialised future.”

“What excites me most about this research is that I’m not trying to ‘make’ an argument. Although I’m expanding the perceived scope of his influence which is typically oriented towards the ‘global North’, I’m primarily interested in learning more about Ellison in relation to Africa and South Africa and *vice versa*. It’s a very freeing space to be in and an enviable part of my profession as a scholar.”

Until then her work as Associate Professor will keep her busy. She was promoted in 2020 from Senior Lecturer. “I’m still struggling with being called professor,” she laughed. “And with the expectations and workload that go with the title.”

“I feel strongly that my time at STIAS was pivotal in that, though,” she added. “It afforded me the opportunity to do things I wouldn’t have been able to – my research outputs were much stronger, the building of networks much more pronounced – all of which read well in terms of the promotions committee.”

“I continue to be grateful for the opportunities my STIAS fellowship afforded me. The connections and opportunities continue to grow. Little did I know then the impact it was going to have, the doors it would open. I’m hoping the Ellison project will afford me an opportunity to push my thinking even further and bring different and new opportunities.”

Phiri tries to maintain a balanced lifestyle, however, and has expanded her exercise regime to include cycling, swimming and rowing.

“I’m still very much a runner but after experiencing some running injuries and on the advice of my doctor (who happens to also be a sports doctor!), I’ve been forced to diversify my exercise,” she explained. “During COVID my partner – knowing how bad things can become for him if I don’t exercise – bought me an exercise bike. That’s how it started. The rowing machine was an anniversary gift – so I now have what you might call a fully equipped gym at home and a relatively sane partner.”

COVID also brought a family addition. “Another dog – number three. She was a tiny little thing that we didn’t think would be bigger than a Jack Russell but, like all pavement specials, she grew into something fairly unrecognisable, with a personality we can’t recognise either. She’s called Huntley and, appropriately named, she’s a curious thing, really. A bit like myself I think!” α

NEWS ROUNDUP

STIAS Public Lecture Series first semester 2022

Land reform and rural production in South Africa – William Beinart

The Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture (2019) argued that 'land reform must be oriented around growing the agricultural sector to foster economic development, and not purely be an endeavour to transfer land'. Land reform should be guided by past racial injustices but should also contribute to rural standards of living and national economic growth. Beinart's talk suggested a pragmatic and gradual approach, starting with the relative growth in commercial agriculture, despite policy and climatic uncertainty. He explored what models and schemes have potential – in particular joint ventures and partnerships. In a context where state funding and capacity are limited, engagement

Below: William Beinart



by commodity organisations, commercial farmers and the private sector, as well as NGOs, provides a promising way forward. A variety of projects in sectors such as sugar, forestry, wool, fruit and dairy have absorbed tens of thousands of participants. Do these provide promise for productive land reform strategies? What is the evidence on self-generated smallholder initiatives, focusing more on local food supply? How should demand for land, more specifically in the urban and peri-urban areas, be factored into the discussion?

William Beinart is emeritus professor at St Antony's College, University of Oxford and an associate of the African Studies Centre. He was educated at the Universities of Cape Town and London, and worked at the Universities of Bristol and Oxford. He was Director of the African Studies Centre at Oxford and President of the African Studies Association of the UK (2008-10). His research has focused largely on the history of South Africa, especially the Eastern Cape, and on environmental history. In recent years he has written on land reform and been involved in land restitution cases. His publications include *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (1987 with Colin Bundy), *Environment and History* (1995 with Peter Coates), *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (2001), *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa* (2003), *Environment and Empire* (2007 with Lotte Hughes), *Prickly Pear* (2011, new edition 2021 with Luvuyo Wotshela), *African Local Knowledge* (2013 with Karen Brown), *Rights to Land* (2017 with Peter Delius and Michelle Hay) and *The Scientific Imagination in South Africa, 1700 to the Present* (2021 with Saul Dubow). Beinart served on the Oriel College commission assessing the Rhodes legacy in 2020/2021.

See <https://stias.ac.za/2022/02/land-reform-and-rural-production-in-south-africa-a-pragmatic-approach-stias-public-lecture-by-william-beinart/>



Above: *Prickly Pear* by William Beinart and Luvuyo Wotshela

Queer bodies in African films – Gibson Ncube

This presentation focused on the book project Ncube has undertaken over the last three years at STIAS within the framework of the Iso Lomso Fellowship. He makes two important interventions in this study. First, he centres the body as a site of understanding queerness. The filmed queer body, he argues, is invested with multiple and often intersecting discourses and narratives. The queer body is inscribed with more than just desire, eroticism and sexuality. Second, he focuses on the (dis)continuities in how queer bodies are represented on either side of the Sahara. African Studies is a bifurcated field that is often separated by the Sahara. Studies that focus on North Africa often tend to focus exclusively on that part of the continent and the same can be said about studies on Sub-Saharan Africa.

Through an analysis of selected films, he highlighted the particularities of queer representation in different parts of the African continent. Attentive to history and context, he showed how queer identities are negotiated in and through film. In so doing, examining how screened cultural artefacts possess an illocutionary force that has the potential of brokering important dialogue on issues relating to queer lived experiences in Africa. Films have potential to not only destabilise monolithic perceptions of gender and sexual identities. Some of the overarching questions that he grappled with include: What tools are

required to decipher the filmed queer bodies? How do the language and formal aesthetics of films reconceptualise queer bodies as interpretable texts, as voiced materiality infused with a language etched with different codes, symbols and meanings? What are the implications of viewing queer bodies in films? What emotions are evoked in viewing films featuring queer African bodies?

Gibson Ncube is a Lecturer in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages at Stellenbosch University. He is the 2021 Mary Kingsley Zochonis Distinguished Lecturer (African Studies Association UK & Royal African Society). He is an alumnus of the African Humanities Programme Postdoctoral Fellowship (American Council for Learned Societies) as well as the STIAS [Iso Lomso Fellowship](#). He sits in the Editorial Boards of *Nomina Africana*, the *Journal of Literary Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of African Studies* and the *Governing Intimacies in the Global South* Book Series at Manchester University Press. He is Assistant Editor of the *South African Journal of African Languages*. He is also the current Co-Convenor of the Queer African Studies Association. He holds a Y1 rating by the National Research Foundation of South Africa. His research interests are in Comparative Literatures, Queer and Gender Studies as well as Postcolonial African Cultural Studies.

See <https://stias.ac.za/2022/04/queer-bodies-in-african-film-stias-public-lecture-by-gibson-ncube/> and our interview with Ncube on page 7.

Below: Gibson Ncube



Right: Barbara König

Conspecifics matter: Revealing the basis and the significance of social interactions – Barbara König

Social interactions play a crucial role in the lives of organisms, including humans. They influence varied aspects of an individual's life history, physiology and behaviour, and therefore are in the focus of interest of fields as diverse as medicine, immunology, evolution, behavioural ecology, population biology and theoretical biology. Individuals benefit from social interactions, but at the same time compete over access to resources. A challenging situation here is that the social environment is characterised by a high degree of flexibility and intrinsic unpredictability and is thus considered to be the most complex and fluctuating component of an individual's environment. König's research focuses on social interactions in an evolutionary framework and uses an integrative approach to understand how differences in the social environment lead to differences in social interactions that translate into fitness differences between individuals. Utilising a long-term data set on a population of wild house mice (*Mus musculus domesticus*) the aim is to investigate general principles underlying the evolution of sociality and its endocrine and neural mechanisms. In her talk she highlighted communal offspring care among female house mice to illustrate how decision making and social partner choice allow the mice to stabilise cooperation and affect the dynamics of social groups and the entire population.

Barbara König, German by birth, studied biology at the University of Konstanz, with a PhD received in 1985. After research fellowships and positions in Australia, Switzerland, Germany and India, she joined the University of Zurich, Switzerland, in 1996 as head of Animal Behaviour, until she retired in 2020. Her research interest is animal behaviour, studied from an evolutionary perspective. With her group, they aim to understand the evolution of social behaviour as well as how interactions with conspecifics structure groups and populations, processes also relevant for conservation. Working both in the field and the laboratory, they use behavioural, ecological, physiological and molecular genetic methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the causes and consequences of social behaviour in mammals. Besides teaching, mentoring and serving as a reviewer, her academic and administrative services included: President of the German Zoological Society (DZG e.V.), Head of the Board of the Alexander von



Humboldt Foundation, Managing Director (Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, Univ. Zurich), Member of Academic Boards or Scientific Advisory Boards (Max-Planck-Society, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Danish National Research Foundation, Volkswagenstiftung, Branco Weiss-Fellowship, National Centre of Competence in Gender Studies Zurich), Secretary General of the International Council of Ethology, and still ongoing: Member of the Board of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences (SCNAT) and Member of the Supervisory Board of the Zoo Zurich AG.

See <https://stias.ac.za/2022/06/mouse-tale-reveals-the-basis-and-significance-of-social-interactions/> α

IN THE NEWS

STIAS hosts SIAS

In June STIAS hosted the annual meeting of Some Institutes for Advanced Study (SIAS).

The SIAS consortium is made up of STIAS and nine other institutes, namely: The Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton; the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford University; the National Humanities Center in North Carolina; the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study; the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study; the Wissenschaftskolleg (Berlin Institute for Advanced Study); the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies; and the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study.

In 2018 STIAS became the first institute for advanced study from the southern hemisphere and first African institute to join the consortium. The SIAS group meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest, common challenges and to explore potential partnerships and collaborations.

This is the first time the group has met in Africa and the group joined members of the first-semester fellow's cohort for their farewell dinner.

Below: SAIP President, Makaiko Chithambo (left), and Hendrik Geyer (right)



2022 De Beers Gold Medal Award of the South African Institute of Physics for Hendrik Geyer

The South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) has awarded its 2022 De Beers Gold Medal to Hendrik Geyer, previous Director of STIAS.

The award is in recognition of Geyer's outstanding academic achievements over the course of his career and, in particular, "for his fundamental and novel contributions in the field of non-Hermitian quantum mechanics, leadership in building the field of Theoretical Physics in South Africa and significant contributions to the education and training of students", as communicated to the SAIP membership.

In making the award the SAIP's Standard and Awards Committee noted Geyer's professional contributions internationally and nationally including his efforts in the establishment of the National Institute for Theoretical Physics (NITheP) and his work at STIAS. The committee also highlighted his commitment to engaging with young scientists saying: "Your efforts in developing young academics through your high standards of supervision are exemplary".

The SAIP is a non-profit, professional body which was established in 1955. Its mission is to be the voice of physics in South Africa. The De Beers Gold Medal is the highest award conferred by the SAIP.

In his congratulatory message, SAIP President, Makaiko Chithambo said: "This award reflects the very high regard with which you are held by the physics community in this country and internationally ... warm congratulations on your award."

Geyer was the Director of STIAS between 2008 and 2018 having succeeded founding director Prof. Bernard Lategan. He was previously Professor of Theoretical Physics and Director of the Institute for Theoretical Physics of Stellenbosch University. Among many career highlights, Geyer was the driving force behind the establishment of NITheP, is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa, a research fellow of the Institute for Nuclear Theory of the University of Washington in Seattle, and recipient of the sought-after Alexander von Humboldt Award. He has also been involved in the popularisation of science for many years as contributor to the *Die Burger* column, 'Wetenskap Vandag' (Science Today), and a regular panel member for the radio programme, 'Hoe verklaar jy dit?' (How do you explain that?).

"On behalf of STIAS, I warmly congratulate Hendrik for this award and thank him for making us proud," said Edward Kirumira, STIAS Director. "It's extremely well-deserved and we are honoured to be associated with Hendrik's professional contribution and efforts."

Comprehensive examination of the complex question of land reform in South Africa

“Contestations over land in South Africa will not go away in the foreseeable future,” said Olaf Zenker. “We hope to contribute to large debates on redistributive justice in critically constructive ways. This event is looking at all futures. We are delving into foundational principles that underlie South African property law and how livelihoods and property law exclude the current realities for many South Africans.”

“The expropriation without compensation discussion is so dominant that it eliminates other issues like gender, agrarian transformation, jobless growth, urbanisation and climate change,” he continued. “What about a bottom-up, living-land approach? What about the role and control of traditional authorities? We have to imagine all futures beyond just the rule of law.”

STIAS fellow and conference leader Zenker from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany, was speaking at the opening of an international conference held at STIAS in February focusing on constitutional amendment, land reform and the future of redistributive justice in South Africa.

Against the backdrop of widespread perceptions that transformative constitutionalism and land reform have fallen short of their promises to bring about redistributive justice in substantive and meaningful ways, South African public discourse has been dominated over the past few years by debates about the need to amend the property clause of the Constitution to allow for expropriation of land without compensation.

In 2019 the National Assembly (NA) adopted the motion to amend the Constitution to allow for such expropriation and an *Ad Hoc* Committee was formed to initiate legislation amending Section 25 of the Constitution. Due to the magnitude of the task and the COVID-19 pandemic, it took the Committee longer than anticipated to table its final report and officially introduce the Constitution 18th Amendment Bill to Parliament on 8 September 2021.

On 7 December 2021, the NA rejected the Amendment Bill, which was not a surprise given disapproval of its wording among opposition parties. However, the Expropriation Bill which specifies circumstances in which “nil compensation” may be just and equitable is still on the table.

The aim of the conference was to take stock of the proposed amendment and use it as a springboard to think beyond conventional forms of land reform towards alternative futures of transformative redistribution. The conference brought together panels of international speakers under three sub-topics:

- **Panel 1:** *The rights and wrongs of South African property law*, led by Zsa-Zsa Boggenpoel, South African Research Chair in Property Law, Stellenbosch University.
- **Panel 2:** *Potentials and pitfalls of land reform in the shadow of constitutional change* led by Cherryl Walker, South African Research Chair in the Sociology of Land, Environment and Sustainable Development, Stellenbosch University.
- **Panel 3:** *Imagining alternative futures of redistributive justice in South Africa* led by James Ferguson, Stanford University.

Papers were presented by world-renowned experts on land, the constitution and law including former Public Protector and Law Trust Chair in Social Justice at Stellenbosch University, Thuli Madonsela; Ruth Hall from the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS); Mazibuko Jara from *Amandla!*; and Head of Land Reform, Restitution and Tenure at Werkmans Attorneys, Bulelwa Mabasa.

The range of papers presented clearly highlights the complex nature of the problem as well as the different perspectives, contexts and conversations required. Topics included making sense of the expropriation without compensation debate; notions of justice; equitable compensation; socially just and people-centred land reform; the rights and wrongs of South African property law; lived reality; gendered land reform; perspectives of white commercial farmers; the entrenchment of orthodoxy; the impact of social-ecological change; rethinking labour; economic approaches; climate breakdown and food security; transformative taxes and the moral politics of land distribution.

To download the full conference programme with speaker profiles, topics and presentation abstracts go to: <https://stias.ac.za/events/compensation-through-expropriation-without-compensation>

Also see information on the public webinar of William Beinart on page 11.



Above: Nokwanda (Nox) Makunga

Above right: Jannie Hofmeyr (photo: Stefan Els)

Changes to the STIAS Research and Fellowship Committee

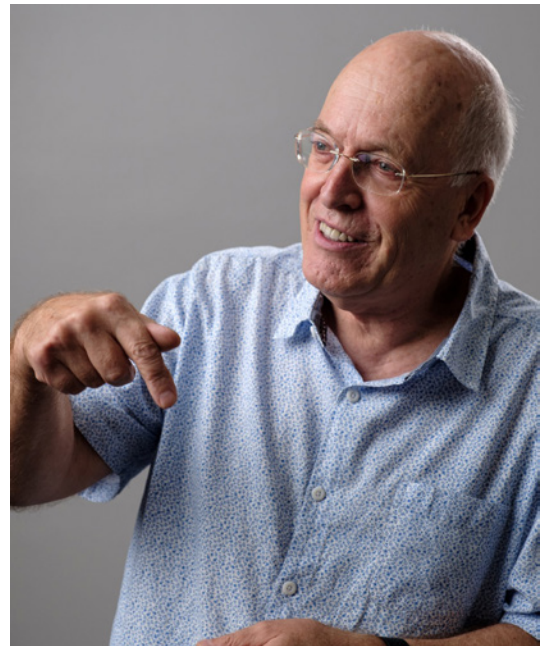
In July, Jannie Hofmeyr retired from the STIAS Research and Fellowship Programme Committee after 22 years of involvement in the establishment and growth of STIAS.

Jannie Hofmeyr is an Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at Stellenbosch University, where he has been a member of the Biochemistry Department since 1975. His research of the past four decades has been in the field of computational systems biology where his main focus has been the understanding of regulatory design of metabolism as well as the broader study of complex systems. This led to the establishment of the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (now the Centre for Sustainability Transitions), of which he was co-director. Hofmeyr is a Fellow and former President of the Royal Society of South Africa and also a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa. He is a founder member and former Vice President of the International Society for Code Biology, and a member of the Committee of the International Study Group for Systems Biology. From 2000 to 2015 he maintained a National Research Foundation A-rating. His many awards include the Stellenbosch University Chancellors Award in 2018.

His position on the committee has been filled by Nox Makunga, who is professor in the Department of Botany and Zoology at Stellenbosch University.

Adam Tas Corridor project update

In July a workshop was held at STIAS which aimed to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding between stakeholders who are part of the Interim Steering Committee of the Adam Tas Corridor Project as well as landowners. The Corridor is featured in Stellenbosch's Integrated Development Plan as a Catalytic Project, and the Adam Tas Corridor Local Spatial Development Framework



implementation, but institutional arrangements, rights and obligations are yet to be clarified and this group aims to take this forward via reaching consensus through a collaborative approach. The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) is facilitator of the partnering process and agreement. The Stellenbosch Municipality has also commenced a public-participation process for residents to have their say in the development framework.

The Adam Tas Corridor is the start of Stellenbosch's emerging urban-transformation district. The vision is to create an integrated urban-development corridor that is liveable, safe, resource-efficient, socially integrated, economically inclusive, and globally competitive, in which all citizens can actively participate. The hope is to create a place that embodies best knowledge on what constitutes good, equitable urbanism, and supports and enhances national, provincial and municipal policies.

The project will provide infrastructure and spaces for increased community integration. Planning of the corridor is at an advanced stage and has involved a multidisciplinary group, including local and provincial planning authorities, urban developers, and STIAS Fellows. It is supported by the Western Cape government, National Treasury, the Stellenbosch Municipality, Stellenbosch University, STIAS, and local business and academic leaders.

The corridor covers 375 hectares of currently under-developed, under-utilised land and facilities – stretching from the sawmill site along the railway line and the edge of the Papegaaiberg Nature Reserve to Kayamandi, Cloeteville and Idas Valley. It's an area nearly four times as large as the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town with the potential to include 13 500 new housing opportunities for students, workers, employees, and poorer households, as well as entrepreneurial and social spaces and enhanced public transport.

More information on the background to the project can be found at: <https://stias.ac.za/?s=adam+tas+corridor>

Kluge Fellowship for Phiri

Aretha Phiri of the Department of Literary Studies in English at Rhodes University and Iso Lomso fellow has been awarded the prestigious Kluge Fellowship by the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress in Washington. The fellowships are offered for up to 12 months and give the recipients full access to all the repositories of the Library of Congress. Phiri will be in Washington from December 2022 to March 2023. Read more in our interview on p. 9

NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* makes the Booker Prize Shortlist

NoViolet Bulawayo's second novel, *Glory* made the Shortlist for the Booker Prize. Her debut, *We Need New Names* was also shortlisted in 2013.

The Booker Prize is the leading literary award in the English-speaking world, bringing recognition, reward and readership to outstanding fiction for over five decades.

Each year, the prize is awarded to what is, in the opinion of the judges, the best sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK and Ireland. The winner receives £50,000 as well as the £2,500 awarded to each of the six shortlisted authors.

Described as an energetic and exhilarating joyride, *Glory* is the story of an uprising, told by a chorus of animal



Above: Thomas Hylland Eriksen

voices that help us see our human world more clearly. By unveiling the myriad tricks required to uphold the illusion of absolute power, it reminds us that the glory of tyranny only lasts as long as its victims are willing to let it.

Bulawayo worked on the novel whilst she was Artist-in-Residence at STIAS in 2019. At her STIAS public lecture she said: "I'm both lucky and cursed to be working on a currently unfolding drama, that is, and of course without giving anything away, very much inspired by a most public narrative where pretty much everybody follows and therefore knows and understands the story, and some probably even better than I do. What this means is I don't have to work that hard to dig for my material, I simply have to be present in all the possible ways, open myself up, and really listen. And then, this is perhaps the fun part for me – take the obvious, the known, that which is in front of our faces and make it fresh, make it new, make it interesting."

This is Bulawayo's first work to be researched and written in its entirety on the continent. She earned her MFA at Cornell and has taught fiction writing at Cornell and Stanford.

Gold medal for Eriksen

At the 2022 Vega Symposium held at Stockholm University Thomas Hylland Eriksen, professor at the University of Oslo and STIAS fellow was awarded the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography Medal in Gold 2022, for "his profound contributions to anthropology".

The theme of the symposium focused on the future of diversity: Biology, culture and bio culture and Eriksen presented a paper titled: Threats to diversity in the shadow of Anthropocene overheating.

Eriksen was in residence at STIAS in the first semester of 2022. Read more about his STIAS project at: <https://stias.ac.za/2022/04/globalisation-impacts-not-only-biological-but-also-cultural-diversity/> α

Left: NoViolet Bulawayo



Gathering Africa and the World around the Nobel fireplace

Nobel in Africa launched with huge celebration, excitement and expectation

The day started with early morning pulsating drumbeats announcing the gathering of Africa and the world around the Nobel fireplace and ended with the smooth, tantalising jazz rhythms of legendary South African musician Nduduzo Makhathini at the scenic Nooitgedacht Wine Estate.

25 October 2022 was a much anticipated and unforgettable realisation of years of planning and conversation to bring the first Nobel Symposium to Africa as part of the Nobel in Africa Initiative.

"This is a truly momentous event," said STIAS Director Edward K. Kirumira. "The continent will celebrate for years to come. It's one of the most coveted events in the world, a confirmation of international recognition and a huge opportunity for South Africa and the African scholarly ecosystem. We welcome all to the fireplace of conversation, exchange and the sharing of wisdom – a convening of science for the benefit of humankind."

Nobel in Africa is a STIAS initiative in partnership with Stellenbosch University, under the auspices of the Nobel Foundation and the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences with funding from the Knut & Alice Wallenberg Foundation. The Initiative was officially launched on 25 October 2022 and the first Nobel Symposium on African soil in Physics under the theme: 'Predictability in science in the Age of AI' ran from 24 to 28 October 2022 with an extensive outreach programme at the University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Nelson Mandela University, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of the Witwatersrand running across two weeks.

STIAS is the first institution outside of Scandinavia to host a Nobel Symposium since they commenced in 1965.

Right: Convenors of the Nobel in Africa – Nobel Symposia Series with launch MC, Claire Mawisa. From left: Erik Aurell – Physics 2022, Fredrik Almqvist – Chemistry 2023, Jacob Svensson – Economic Sciences, March 2024

The Physiology/Medicine Nobel Symposium is planned for October 2024 with convenor, Göran Hansson (not in the photo).





The Nobel in Africa Symposia Series provides a unique opportunity to showcase excellent, innovative, high-level, collaborative scholarship and research. The goal is to provide a platform for creative discussions between leading scientists on the continent and the world, and to inspire the next generation of scientists.

“African voices are being amplified loud and clear,” said Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University. “A thrilling day has arrived. We are happy to welcome the foremost scientific minds to address research that truly has impact.”

Meeting of true minds

“We congratulate Africa and the incredible efforts that have been made to bring us around this fireplace,” said Nobel Foundation Executive Director Vidar Helgesen. “The Nobel Prize was a hugely controversial and grand ambition when it started, but Alfred Nobel’s will has proven its worth. It has proven it is possible for humans to change the course of history, to change the world and our minds. Nobel laureates make up an important global community of change makers and a source of hope and inspiration. We hope that Nobel in Africa can inspire more breakthroughs especially for the African continent. Breakthroughs happen when true minds meet.”

Explaining the role of the Wallenberg Foundations – one of the largest private foundations supporting science, which at any one time supports about 1 000 scientists and 1300 PhDs, Peter Wallenberg Jr. acknowledged STIAS’s Founding Director, Bernard Lategan and highlighted that although the Foundations were established primarily for the betterment of Sweden “the one exception is STIAS – my father was bitten by the African bug”.

“We have also funded Nobel Symposia for 50 years,” he continued. “Now at last the two come together. We are looking forward to the success of Nobel in Africa.”

"The Nobel Prize ... has proven it is possible for humans to change the course of history, to change the world and our minds ... We hope that Nobel in Africa can inspire more breakthroughs especially for the African continent. Breakthroughs happen when true minds meet."

The focus on the expansion of academic endeavours in Africa as well as some of the corresponding challenges were highlighted in presentations by Judith Omumbo of the Science for Africa Foundation and Phethiwe Matutu, Chief Executive Officer of Universities South Africa.

Focusing in detail on the Nobel Prize in Physics, a fascinating presentation by Mats Larsson outlined the controversial history of the 1932 Prize awarded to Werner Karl Heisenberg “for the creation of quantum mechanics, the application of which has, *inter alia*, led to the discovery of the allotropic forms of hydrogen” and the 1933 Prize awarded jointly to Erwin Schrödinger and Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac “for the discovery of new productive forms of atomic theory” – in which the final decisions may have come down to a terse, one-line, handwritten letter from Albert Einstein.

Symposium specifics

STIAS will host the first eight Nobel Symposia in Africa.

Addressing the theme of the Physics symposium, convenor, Erik Aurell explained that in a world that will produce 200 zettabytes in digital data this year alone and where the mobile phone is the most-used device, we have to find better ways of harnessing technology, big data and artificial intelligence to predict the unknowns to the greatest advantage to the world and planet.

The Chemistry Symposium under the theme – ‘Tuberculosis and Antibiotic Resistance: From Basic Drug Discovery to Clinic’ is scheduled for October 2023 and will focus on “a silent pandemic that is on par with climate change in terms of potential impact” according to convenor, Fredrik Almqvist. The chief of all pathogens – TB, causes 1.5 million deaths and nearly 500 000 multi-drug resistant cases each year for which we need safer antibiotics, better and shorter treatment, and ways to fully eradicate the pathogen from the host. The symposium is well-placed in South Africa in which some of the top scientists in the world are working on antibiotic resistance and TB.

The Economic Sciences Symposium scheduled for March 2024 will discuss insights in the field of micro economics in the last 20 years. “We will take stock of existing knowledge and focus on the challenges,” said symposium convenor, Jakob Svensson. “We hope to provide impetus for new research on the economic lives of the world’s poorest.”

The Physiology/Medicine Symposium with the theme ‘Progress and Challenges in Cardiovascular Medicine’ is scheduled for October 2024 and will be convened by Göran Hansson of Karolinska Institute. [α](#)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

For the full list of publications by STIAS fellows see: <https://stias.ac.za/fellows/publications>

Meike Lettau, Christopher Yusufu Mtaku and Eric Debrah Otchere. 2022. *Performing Sustainability in West Africa: Cultural Practices and Policies for Sustainable Development*. Routledge.

www.routledge.com/Performing-Sustainability-in-West-Africa-Cultural-Practices-and-Policies/Lettau-Mtaku-Otchere/p/book/9781032198224

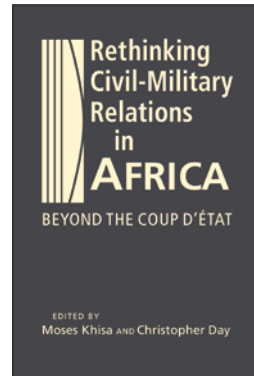
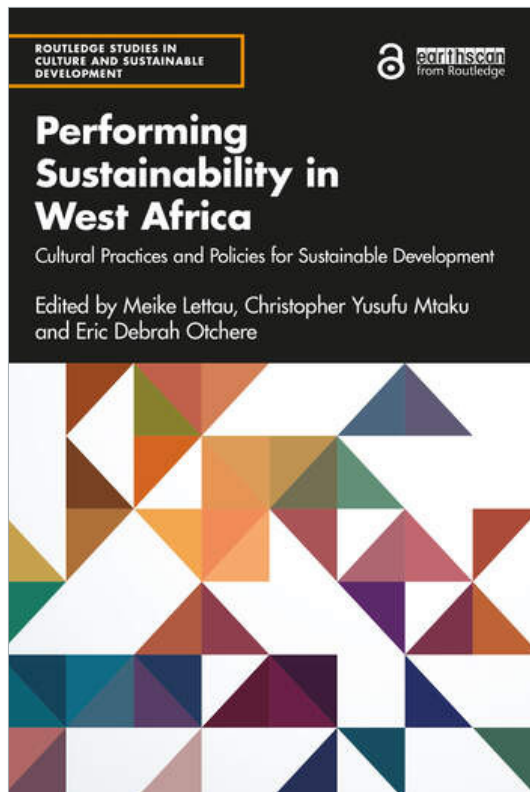
This book discusses the role of cultural practices and policy for sustainable development in West Africa across different artistic disciplines, including performance, video, theatre, community arts and cultural heritage.

Based on ethnographic field research in local communities, the book presents findings on current debates of cultural

sustainability in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Benin. It provides a unique perspective connecting cultural studies, conflict studies and practical peacebuilding approaches through the arts. The first part pays particular attention to aspects of social cohesion and the circumstances of internally displaced persons, e.g. caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. The second part focuses on cultural policy issues and challenges in the context of sustainable development, investigating participatory approaches and bottom-up processes, the role of governments and civil society, as well as performing arts organisations and universities in policy making and implementation processes.

Performing Sustainability in West Africa presents research results and new methods on the role of artistic and cultural practices in conflict situations as well as current debates in cultural policy for researchers, academics, NGOs and students in cultural studies, sustainable development studies and African studies.

“Performing Sustainability in West Africa provides a unique perspective connecting cultural studies, conflict studies and practical peacebuilding approaches through the arts.”

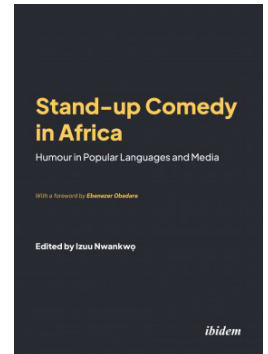


Moses Khisa and Christopher Day. (Eds.). 2022. *Rethinking Civil-Military Relations in Africa: Beyond the Coup d'État*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

www.riener.com/title/Rethinking_Civil_Military_Relations_in_Africa_Beyond_the_Coup_d_tat

Though Africa historically has been the site of countless military coups d'état, civil-military relations across the continent have changed dramatically in recent years. What do these changes say about the military's ongoing role in Africa's political and social institutions? How useful are conventional models for understanding civil-military relations in the African context?

The authors of *Rethinking Civil-Military Relations in Africa* address these questions, exploring the nature and significance of evolving relationships between political authority, military power, and society.

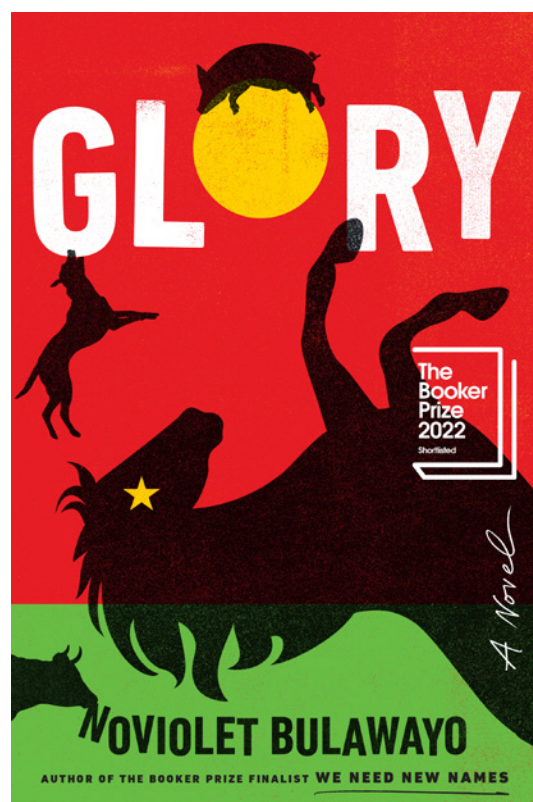


Izuu Nwankwo. Ed. 2022. *Stand-up Comedy in Africa: Humour in Popular Languages and Media*. Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag.

www.ibidem.eu/de/contributor/index/contributorlist/id/4992

African cultural productions of humour have increased even in the face of myriad economic foibles and social upheavals. From the 1990s, stand-up comedy in particular has emerged across the continent and has maintained a pervasive presence. Its specificities are related to contemporary economic and political contexts and are also drawn from its pre-colonial history, that of joking forms and relationships, and orality.

Izuu Nwankwo's fascinating collected volume offers a transnational appraisal of this unique art form spanning different nations of the continent and its diasporas. The book engages variously with jokesters, their materials, the mediums of dissemination, and the cultural value(s) and relevance of their stage



work, encompassing the form and content of the practice. Its ruling theoretical perspective comes from theatre and performance, cultural studies, linguistics and literary studies.

NoViolet Bulawayo. 2022. *Glory*. Viking.

www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/592441/glory-by-noviolet-bulawayo/

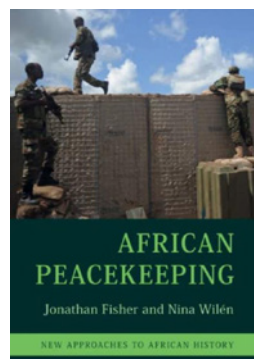
NoViolet Bulawayo's bold new novel follows the fall of the Old Horse, the long-serving leader of a fictional country, and the drama that follows for a rumbustious nation of animals on the path to true liberation. Inspired by the unexpected fall by coup in November 2017 of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's president of nearly four

decades, *Glory* shows a country's imploding, narrated by a chorus of animal voices that unveil the ruthlessness required to uphold the illusion of absolute power and the imagination and bulletproof optimism to overthrow it completely. By immersing readers in the daily lives of a population in upheaval, Bulawayo reveals the dazzling life force and irresistible wit that lie barely concealed beneath the surface of seemingly bleak circumstances.

And at the centre of this tumult is Destiny, a young goat who returns to Jidada to bear witness to revolution—and to recount the unofficial history and the potential legacy of the females who have quietly pulled the

strings here. The animal kingdom – its connection to our primal responses and its resonance in the mythology, folktales, and fairy tales that define cultures the world over – unmasks the surreality of contemporary global politics to help us understand our world more clearly, even as Bulawayo plucks us right out of it.

Although Zimbabwe is the immediate inspiration for this thrilling story, *Glory* was written in a time of global clamour, with resistance movements across the world challenging different forms of oppression. Thus it often feels like Bulawayo captures several places in one blockbuster allegory, crystallising a turning point in history with the texture and nuance that only the greatest fiction can.

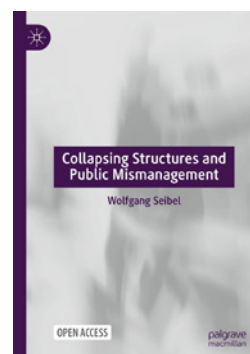


Jonathan Fisher and Nina Wilén. 2022. *African Peacekeeping*. Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108582179>

Exploring the story of Africa's contemporary history and politics through the lens of peacekeeping, this concise and accessible book, based on over a

decade of research across ten countries, focuses not on peacekeeping in Africa but, rather, peacekeeping by Africans. Going beyond the question of why post-conflict states contribute troops to peacekeeping efforts, Jonathan Fisher and Nina Wilén demonstrate how peacekeeping is – and has been – weaved into Africa's national, regional and international politics more broadly, as well as what implications this has for how we should understand the continent, its history and its politics. In doing so, and drawing on fieldwork undertaken in every region of the continent, Fisher and Wilén explain how profoundly this involvement in peacekeeping has shaped contemporary Africa.

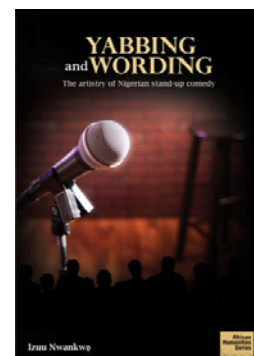


Wolfgang Seibel. 2022. *Collapsing Structures and Public Mismanagement*. Springer International Publishing.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67818-0>

This open-access book is about mismanagement of public agencies as a threat to life and limb. Collapsing bridges and buildings kill people and often leave many more injured. Such

disasters do not happen out of the blue nor are they purely technical in nature since construction and maintenance are subject to safety regulation and enforcement by governmental agencies. The book analyses four relevant cases from Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Germany. Rather than stressing well-known pathologies of bureaucracy as a potential source of disaster, this book argues, learning for the sake of prevention should aim at neutralising threats to integrity and strengthening a sense of responsibility among public officials.



Izuzu Nwankwo. 2021. *Yabbing and Wording: The Artistry of Nigerian Stand-up Comedy*. NISC Press/African Humanities Association.

www.nisc.co.za/products/107/books/yabbing-and-wording-the-artistry-of-nigerian-stand-up-comedy

Yabbing and Wording: The artistry of Nigerian stand-up comedy is an academic interrogation of the novel stand-up practice in Nigeria as performance. 'Yabbing' comes from the Nigerian Pidgin English

verb, 'yab', which means a satirical jibe thrown at individuals, groups or institutions. Nigeria's Fela Kuti used this effectively in his recorded and live music performances against successive military regimes. 'Wording' refers to a game in which parties exchange insults. It is a modern-day coinage for traditional forms of joking that existed across Nigeria and elsewhere in precolonial times.

Nwankwo identifies 'yabbing' and 'wording' as outstanding indigenous elements within contemporary stand-up practice in Nigeria. On the one hand, these local joking patterns inform how comedians fashion their narratives. On the other, they mitigate offence and how the audience responds to ridicule in joke performance venues. The book's strength is its academic perspective and the inclusion of as many examples of stand-up and comedians as possible, to give a panoramic view of the practice. It also traces the historical path of the development of professional stand-up comedy in Nigeria. Its closing chapters detail the global outreach of Nigerian stand-up while also anticipating its future developments.

Roland Balgah and Jude N. Kimengsi. (Eds.). 2022. *Disaster Management in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies, Institutions and Processes*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80262-817-320221011>

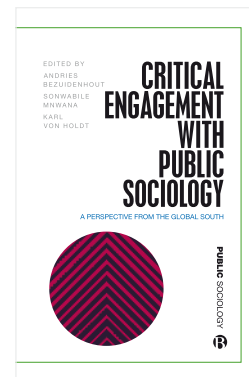
More than ever before, disaster risk reduction and

risk-management policies, institutional frameworks, processes and related issues are gaining increasing importance at national, regional and international levels. This is not surprising, given the current surging levels of hazards and disasters and their future predictions. According to the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2019, multi-hazards affected over 88 million people worldwide between 1997 and 2017. Floods alone are accounting for almost 88% (76 million) of those affected by natural hazards and disasters. In the past 50 years, some 11 000 mostly weather-related disasters (such as floods and droughts) claimed over two million lives, causing economic

losses to the tune of US\$3.6 trillion. Thirty-five per cent of deaths related to weather, climate and water extremes occurred in Africa with two of the three top-affected countries (Kenya and South Africa) in sub-Saharan Africa. In the absence of sufficient efforts, the number of people affected by disasters will surge by 50% by 2030. A rapid paradigm reversal at global and regional levels is needed to backstop natural disaster effects and policies that move from response strategies towards disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation are urgently needed.

This edited volume contributes to the contextual knowledge on DRM in sub-Saharan Africa. It also

contains an extensive glossary of disaster-related terms, which will be helpful to students, lecturers, other scholars and policy actors.

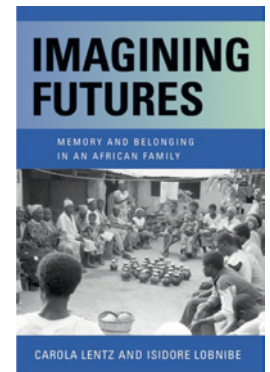


Andries Bezuidenhout, Sonwabile Mnwana and Karl von Holdt. 2022. *Critical Engagement with Public Sociology: A Perspective from the Global South*. Policy Press.

<https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/critical-engagement-with-public-sociology>

The idea of public sociology, as introduced by Michael Burawoy, was inspired by the sociological practice in South Africa known as 'critical engagement'. This volume explores the evolution of critical engagement before and after Burawoy's visit to South Africa in the 1990s and offers a southern critique of his model of public sociology. Involving four generations of researchers from the Global South, the authors provide a multifaceted exploration of the formation of new knowledge through research practices of co-production. Tracing the historical development of 'critical engagement' from a Global South perspective, the book

deftly weaves a bridge between the debates on public sociology and decolonial frameworks.



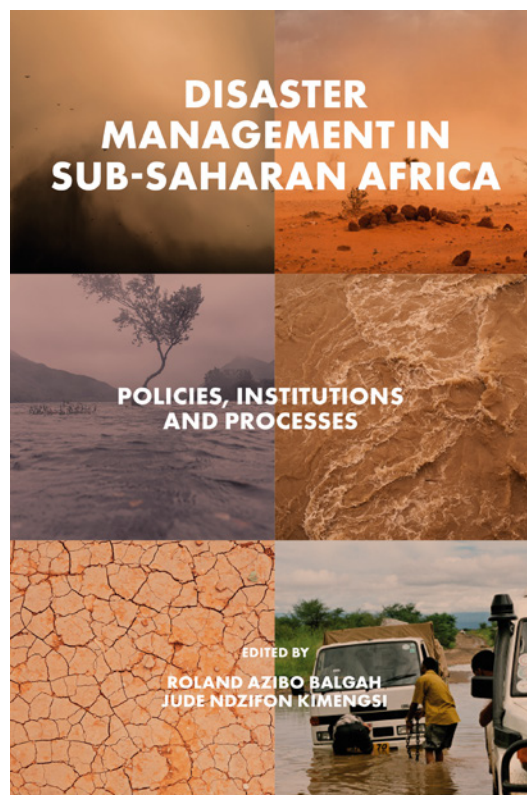
Carola Lentz and Isidore Lobnibe. 2022. *Imagining Futures: Memory and Belonging in an African Family*. Indiana University Press.

<https://iupress.org/9780253060204/imagining-futures>

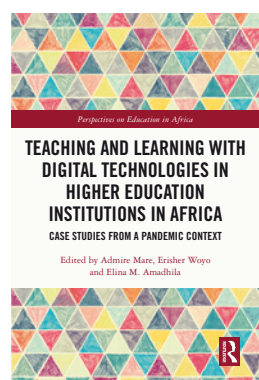
What keeps a family together? In *Imagining Futures*, Carola Lentz and Isidore Lobnibe offer a unique look at one extended African family, currently comprising over 500 members in Northern Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Members of this family, like many others in the region, find themselves living increasingly farther apart and working in diverse occupations ranging from religious clergy and civil service to farming. What keeps them together as a family? In their groundbreaking work, Lentz and Lobnibe argue that shared memories, rather than only material interests, bind a family together.

Imagining Futures explores the changing practices of remembering in an African



family and offers a unique contribution to the growing field of memory studies, beyond the usual focus on Europe and America. Lentz and Lobnibe explore how, in an increasingly globalised, postcolonial world, memories themselves are not static accounts of past events but are actually malleable and shaped by both current concerns and imagined futures.

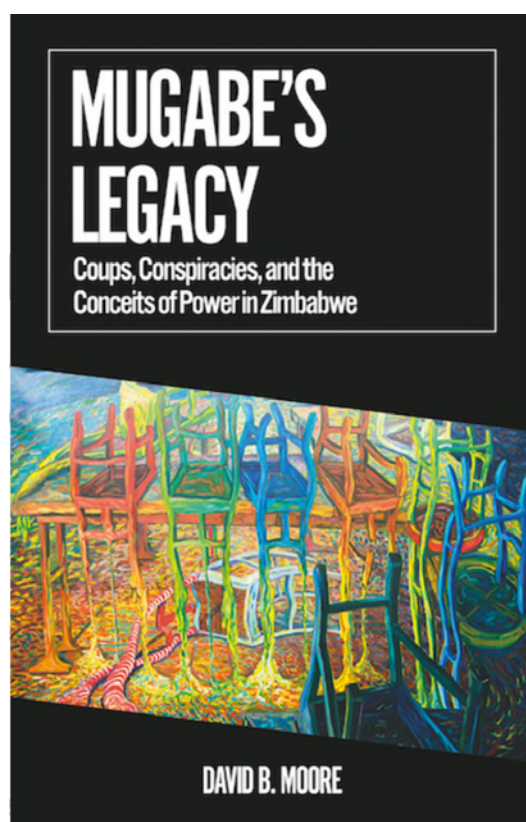


Admire Mare, Erisher Woyo and Elina M. Amadhila. (Eds.). 2022. *Teaching and Learning with Digital Technologies in Higher Education Institutions in Africa*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003264026>

This book critically examines how the COVID-19 pandemic has stimulated digital innovation within higher education using case studies from Africa. Imagining a future for post-pandemic higher education, it analyses the challenges and opportunities of remote teaching and learning.

The book explores the structural barriers around access to higher education and how these were reconfigured and



amplified by technology-dependent teaching and learning. Case studies from countries across Africa provide unique insights into the challenges experienced by Higher Education Institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, examining examples of emergent pedagogies such as online, mobile and social media-enhanced teaching, and blended learning.

The book will be essential reading for researchers, scholars, and students in the fields of higher education study, digital education and educational technology, and African and comparative education. It will also be of interest to higher-education managers and policy makers.

David Moore. 2022. *Mugabe's Legacy: Coups, Conspiracies, and the Conceits of Power in Zimbabwe*. Hurst Publishers.

www.hurstpublishers.com/book/mugabes-legacy/

Zimbabwe's party-internal 'coup' of 2017, and deposed president Robert Mugabe's death nearly two years later, demand careful, historically nuanced explanation. How did Mugabe gain and retain power over party and state for four decades? Did the suspected and nearly real 'coups', the conspiracies behind them, and their concurrent mythomaniacal conceits ultimately, ironically, spell his near-tragic end? Has Mugabe's particular mode of power reached a finality with his own downfall, as his successors struggle more

to balance Zimbabwe's political contradictions? Will the phalanxes arrayed against Mugabe's control fray further, as Zimbabwe fades?

Mugabe's Legacy delves into such questions, drawing on more than 40 years of archival and interview-based research on Zimbabwe's political history and current precariousness. Starting with the mid-1970s, it traces how Machiavellian moves allowed Mugabe to reach the apex of the Zimbabwe African National Union's already slippery slopes, through the complexities of Cold War, regional, ideological, generational, inter- and intra-party tensions. The lessons learned by the president and the nascent ruling party then turned gradually inward, ultimately arriving at a near-collapse that may now pervade all of the country's political space. Moore charts this rise and fall, all the way to Zimbabwe's tenuous chaos today.



David Simpson. 2022. *Engaging Violence: Civility and the Reach of Literature*. Stanford University Press.

www.sup.org/books/title/?isbn=9781503633094

Recent thinking has resuscitated civility as an important paradigm for engaging with a violence that must be deemed endemic to our lives. But, while it is widely acknowledged that civility works against violence, and that literature generates or accompanies civility and engenders tolerance, civility has also been understood as violence in disguise, and literature, which has only rarely sought to claim the power of violence, has often been accused of inciting it. This book sets out to describe the ways in which these words – violence, literature and civility – and the concepts they evoke are mutually entangled, and the uses to which these entanglements have been put.

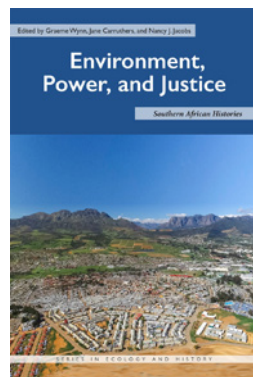
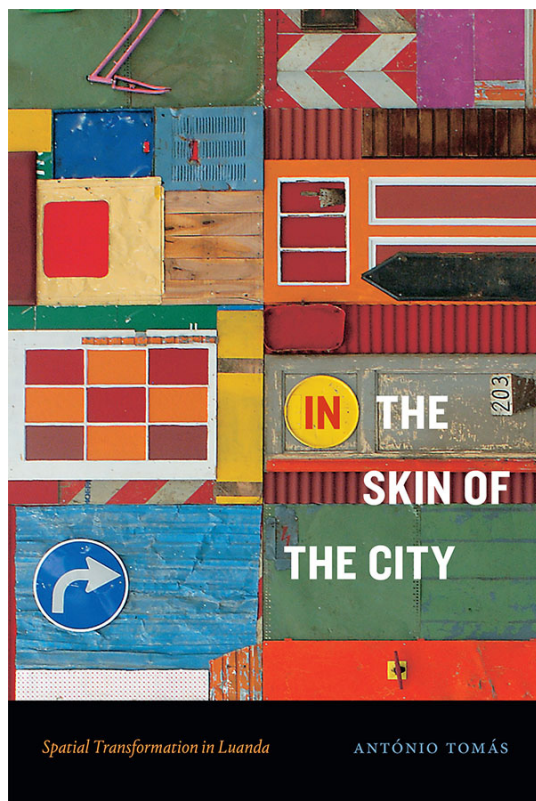
Simpson's argument follows a broadly historical trajectory through the long modern period from the Renaissance to the present, drawing on the work of historians, political scientists, literary scholars and philosophers. The result is a distinctly new argument about the complex and often mystified entanglements between literature, civility and violence in the anglophone Atlantic sphere. What now are our expectations of civility and literature, separately and together? How do these long-familiar but residually imprecise concepts stand up to the demands of the modern world? Simpson's argument is that, despite and perhaps because of their imperfect conceptualisation, both persist as important protocols for the critique of violence.

António Tomás. 2022.
In the Skin of the City: Spatial Transformation in Luanda. Duke University Press.

www.dukeupress.edu/in-the-skin-of-the-city

With *In the Skin of the City*, António Tomás traces the history and transformation of Luanda, Angola, the nation's capital as well as one of the oldest settlements founded by the European colonial powers in the Southern Hemisphere. Drawing on ethnographic and archival research alongside his own experiences growing up in Luanda, Tomás shows how the city's physical and social boundaries – its skin – constitute porous and shifting interfaces between the centre and margins, settler and native,

enslaver and enslaved, formal and informal, and the powerful and the powerless. He focuses on Luanda's "asphalt frontier" – the (colonial) line between the planned urban centre and the *ad hoc* shantytowns that surround it – and the ways squatters are central to Luanda's historical urban process. In their relationship with the state and their struggle to gain rights to the city, squatters embody the process of negotiating Luanda's divisions and the socio-political forces that shape them. By illustrating how Luanda emerges out of the continual redefinition of its skin, Tomás offers new ways to understand the logic of urbanisation in cities across the global South.



Graeme Wynn, Jane Carruthers and Nancy J. Jacobs. (Eds.). 2022.
Environment, Power, and Justice: Southern African Histories. Ohio University Press.

www.ohioswallow.com/book/Environment%2C+Power%2C+and+Justice

Spanning the colonial, postcolonial, and post-apartheid eras, these historical and locally specific case studies analyse and engage vernacular, activist and scholarly efforts to mitigate social-environmental inequity.

This book highlights the ways poor and vulnerable people in South Africa, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe have mobilised against the structural and political forces that deny them a healthy and sustainable environment. These studies engage vernacular, activist, and scholarly efforts to mitigate social-environmental inequity. Some chapters track the genealogies of contemporary activism, while others introduce positions, actors, and thinkers not previously identified with environmental justice. Addressing health,

economic opportunity, agricultural policy, and food security, the book explores a range of issues and ways of thinking about harm to people and their ecologies.

As environmental justice is often understood as a contemporary phenomenon framed around North American examples, these case studies will enrich both southern African history and global environmental studies. *Environment, Power, and Justice* expands conceptions of environmental justice and reveals discourses and dynamics that advance both scholarship and social change.

many encounters that demonstrate African leaders' growing confidence and activism in international relations. Rita Kiki Edozie and Moses Khisa explore the myriad ways in which the continent's diplomatic engagement and influence in the global arena has been expanding in recent decades.

Focusing in particular on collective action through the institutional platform of the AU – while acknowledging the internal challenges involved – the authors show how Africa's role as a dynamic world region is both shaping and being shaped by current trends in global development and geopolitics. **α**



Edozie, Rita Kiki and Moses Khisa. 2022.
Africa's New Global Politics: Regionalism in International Relations. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

www.rienner.com/title/Africa_s_New_Global_Politics_Regionalism_in_International_Relations

The African Union's (AU) threat to lead African states' mass withdrawal from the International Criminal Court in 2008 marked just one of



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