

African Studies Centre

2019 Newsletter



IAB Members with Prof Yemi Osinbajo SAN, Vice President of Nigeria

President Masisi of Botswana with ASC staff and graduate students

President John Mahama of Ghana with Prof Roger Goodman, Warden of St Antony's College (L) and Prof Tim Power, Head of OSGA (R)

AfoX's Dr Anne Makena; President Ameena Gurib-Fokim; VC Prof Louise Richardson; Prof Kevin Marsh



Vice President Osinbajo of Nigeria with Oxford students

ASC Hosts African Presidents!

... As Vice President Osinbajo inaugurates International Advisory Board

African Studies Newsletter 2018–19

Director's Report

The 2018–2019 academic year is a significant one in the history of the Centre. Not only did we inaugurate our new International Advisory Board on Friday, 12th October 2018 (see story in page 4), we also started a tradition that we hope to keep: inviting multiple African leaders to speak at Oxford and interact with town and gown.

We spent considerable time in selecting distinguished men and women from across the continent and outside Africa who, we believe, can help us in enhancing the global profile and visibility of the Centre, facilitating fundraising for scholarships and fellowships, and creating linkages between the Centre and other global and local institutions and organisations in Africa, among others. On behalf of my colleagues, I thank the chair and members of the IAB for accepting our invitation to join the Board – and for their present and future service.

Wale Adebawo interviews President Masisi of Botswana



One of our core missions is to ensure that Africa is at the centre of the debates about global transformation in Oxford. One way to do this is to create interactions between the staff and students and the general public in and around Oxford with key decision makers, thinkers and important actors in the continent – or who work on the continent. To fulfil this mission, we invited and (co-)hosted five African leaders – from four regions of the continent: Southern, Central and West Africa, as well as the Indian Ocean – in one academic year. These included the Presidents of Botswana and Gabon, the immediate past Presidents of Ghana and Mauritius, and the Vice President of Nigeria (see pages 6–12). The multiple possibilities of such interaction have been reflected in different ways even within the academic year. Many of our students have met and interacted with, and learned from, more African presidents in one academic year than previously in their entire lifetimes.



Wale Adebawo welcomes Prof Yemi Osinbajo SAN, Vice President of Nigeria, to the ASC

We are also happy to announce a new annual fellowship in partnership with the Africa Oxford Initiative (AfOx). The AfOx–ASC Fellowships will bring two scholars based in Africa to the Centre for two months every year to focus on a specific aspect of their ongoing research. This will give them access to the enormous resources in the university's libraries and archives. They will also be able to interact with scholars and students not only in the Centre but across the university. We are hoping that this opportunity will lead to lasting collaborations with scholars in many institutions of higher learning and research institutes in Africa. We are hoping to expand the fellowship to a six-month programme in the near future – depending on the success of our fundraising efforts. For the current fellowship, I wish to thank Professor Kevin Marsh, the visionary head of AfOx, Dr Anne Makena, the energetic and thoughtful Programme Coordinator, and other staff of AfOx for their support.

We continue to host a wide range of scholars at the Centre, either as academic visitors or research associates (see pages 20–25). In this academic year, we have hosted or are hosting visitors from the Congo, Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria, Portugal and the USA.

Finally, this edition of our Newsletter points to the wide-ranging engagements of the Centre and its faculty and students – including our alumni.

I thank my colleagues in the Centre for their hard work and commitment in ensuring that we keep up the great tradition of excellent scholarship, teaching and service that was bequeathed to us by the founders of the Centre and those who, for many decades, fought to ensure the holistic study of Africa in Oxford. I must especially thank our administrator, Marta Mas i Serra. Since Marta joined the Centre in September 2018, the Centre has experienced a matchless level of efficiency. And Marta accomplished this with such effortless grace and cheerfulness! This explains why we are all sad that Marta will be leaving us

to return home to Catalonia in July 2019. Anyone who has had any interaction with the Centre could not have failed to notice Marta's enthusiasm for work, her warmth and her cool effectiveness. We can only wish her the very best as she leaves Oxford. I also thank, Danielle Del Vicario, the Centre's alum and current doctoral student in the History Faculty, who coordinated the production of this newsletter.



St Antony's College Steward, Mark Taylor (middle), and his assistants, Jacob Moss (R) and Ladislav Seres

Running the Centre involves interfacing with so many sections of the university. I do not have the space to thank the many people who humanise the process of such institutional interactions. However, I must thank the Head of OSGA, Professor Tim Power, the Head of OSGA Admin, Mrs. Erin Gordon – who manages to smile even in the face of seemingly intractable problems – and the staff of OSGA. The Warden of St Antony's College, Professor Roger Goodman and the staff of the College – including the wonderful men and women who work in the kitchen and servery, led by College Steward, Mark Taylor (see photo above) – have been very supportive of our activities at the Centre. The African Studies Centre has probably invited more guests to dinner on more occasions than any of the other centres in this academic year. And we are not done yet! We hope we can always ask for more!

**Wale Adebawo,
Director, African Studies Centre.**



The ASC inaugurates new International Advisory Board

Coralie Lolliot (ASC MSc Class, 2018–2019)

Vice-President Osinbajo meets with Tim Power, Head of Oxford School of Global and Area Studies

On 12 October 2018, the Oxford African Studies Centre's new International Advisory Board (IAB) was officially inaugurated by Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the Vice-President of Nigeria. The IAB is composed of a distinguished group of accomplished Africans and friends of Africa who are committed to promoting advanced study of the continent and the continent's relationship with the wider world. Its principal purposes include supporting talented students from Africa and the African Diaspora to study at the Centre, and fostering linkages between the ASC and institutions and organizations in Africa and elsewhere.

The IAB is chaired by Mr. Tito Mboweni, who was appointed the new South African Minister of Finance just days before travelling to Oxford for the inauguration of the Board. Other members of the IAB include Namibian First Lady and lawyer, Monica Geingos, former United Nations Under-Secretary of Political Affairs and Nigeria's former External Affairs Minister, Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Zambian social development expert and former First Lady, Dr Charlotte Harland-Scott, quantity surveyor and Governor of Kaduna State in Nigeria, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, Gareth Ackerman, the Chairman of Pick'n Pay, South Africa, Founder and Managing Director of DLO Energy Group South Africa, Linda Mabhena-Olagunju, Policy Practice. UK Director, Alex Duncan, and Ghanaian economist and author, Ivor Agyeman-Duah.

Gathering this group of exceptional minds to support the ASC marked an exciting step for the Centre. On the day, I was part of a cohort of students and staff who welcomed the IAB members at the ASC. Being close to these high-profile officials and leaders was both

empowering and exciting for someone in their early twenties. Following the Board's meeting at the ASC, I further had the chance to escort Mr. Duncan to the lecture theatre. I benefited from an enlightening chat regarding his experience and work as a Policy Practice Director. It was for me a pleasant experience to hear the thoughts and lessons, as it gave me some more wisdom regarding my own career ambitions. Before formally inaugurating the Board, Osinbajo eloquently delivered a lecture titled 'The Challenges of Human Development in 21st Century Africa'. In front of a full room of students, scholars, visitors and eminent guests from the UK and different parts of Africa, he eloquently addressed the challenges of human development in Africa. As an accomplished scholar, teacher, lawyer and administrator, Osinbajo drew from his professorial and government experiences.

Drawing on evidence from various UNDP Human Development indexes, Osinbajo first recognized the scale of existing poverty despite substantial progress in the past decades. He stated that, as useful as all the metrics are in showing the current challenges of Nigeria, they do not reflect the loss of dignity and disempowerment felt by those subjected to impoverishment. Offering a critical analysis of his own government, Osinbajo also acknowledged the problem of illicit financial flows from Africa and its link to the general question of corruption. Such honest rendering of the state of affairs in Nigeria made a positive impact on me, as I wasn't expecting him to be openly critical of his own performances and government. Finally, he emphasized the necessity of improving educational outcomes as a crucial tool for ending extreme poverty, reducing inequality and remaining in the path of sustainable growth.

The importance of STEM, the recognition of the benefits of cross-disciplinary skills, critical and creative thinking, and climate change education are, for Osinbajo, all essential to the Nigerian success in the twenty-first century.

Further to this, Osinbajo, who had been the Attorney-General of Lagos State before becoming the VP, reminded the audience that the focus should be on existing opportunities to significantly improve the standards of existence for African communities in Nigeria. He reiterated the necessity to foster the minds of existing talents in Africa and its diaspora,

something that all youth members in the audience cared about strongly. He thus reinforced the very mission undertaken by the IAB, as the group will focus on enhancing innovative knowledge in and on Africa whilst attracting African talents to the Centre. Ultimately, I hope that such focus will be sustained. As such the work of the IAB and the ASC might greatly participate in making the next two decades 'the African decades' towards a brighter future for Africans – and the world.

View short video of event on YouTube here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdHYQbOVDc0>



VP Osinbajo and members of the IAB

Members of the International Advisory Board

The challenges of human development in Africa are clearly enormous, but so are the opportunities... And if we keep our focus, especially on good governance, the next two decades may truly be the African decades.

H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, Vice President of Nigeria



Mr Tito Mboweni
Finance Minister of South Africa



Professor Ibrahim Gambari
Former Nigerian External Affairs Minister and former Nigerian Permanent Representative to the UN



Ms Linda Mabhena-Olagunju
Founder and Managing Director, DLO Energy Group (Pty) Ltd, South Africa



Madame Monica Geingos
Lawyer and First Lady of Namibia



Dr Charlotte Harland-Scott
Economic and social development specialist and Former First Lady of Zambia



Mr Alex Duncan
Development economist; Director, Policy Practice, UK



Mr Gareth Ackerman
Chairman of Pick'n Pay, South Africa



Governor Nasir El-Rufai
Quantity Surveyor and Governor of Kaduna State, Nigeria



Mr Ivor Agyeman-Duah
Economist and author, Accra, Ghana



ASC and Saïd Business School host President Masisi of Botswana

Esther Brown (MSc African Studies, 2018)

On the evening of 10th October, the African Studies Centre, in conjunction with the Saïd Business School, had the fortune of welcoming H.E Mokgweetsi EK Masisi, the fifth President of the Republic of Botswana, to the University of Oxford. The event was very well attended and was followed by an audience Q&A moderated by Professor Wale Adebani, Director of the African Studies Centre, and the Rhodes Professor of Race Relations.

President Masisi's lecture, entitled 'Democracy and Development in Africa', provided a platform for further discussions of development across the African continent. The topic of the lecture is of little surprise, as against a backdrop of limited democratisation in postcolonial Africa, Botswana has long been perceived as the 'African miracle'. President Masisi's lecture certainly conformed to this narrative, and the President offered up lessons and experiences from Botswana's 'prudent management of resources' for ensuring prosperity.

Those who follow political developments in Botswana will know that its success story status came under increased scrutiny during the administration of President Masisi's predecessor, President Seretse Khama Ian Khama. Khama

(2008-2018) was accused of 'creeping authoritarianism' and a number of red flags were raised regarding the quality of democracy in Botswana. Following this period of controversy, the question on all commentators' lips has been whether President Masisi is likely to continue Khama's policies, or mark a departure. Considering this uncertain context, President Masisi's address on matters of democracy and development in Botswana was all the more relevant.

President Masisi began his lecture by stating that at independence (1966) Botswana was among the least developed countries in the world, and was regarded as a 'hopeless basket case'. This change in circumstances, he said, bears testimony to the fortitude of Botswana's 'forefathers', and demonstrates that 'where there is a will, there is a way'. Speaking on how Botswana's success came to be, President Masisi consistently highlighted the links between Botswana's democratic development and its economic success, stating that Botswana's principles of good governance (such as independent institutions and the rule of law) has ingrained a culture of 'sustainable peace and tranquility', which has enabled Botswana to continue to enjoy relative economic prosperity.

Perhaps the most emphasised element of President Masisi's lecture was his reiterations that Botswana's resources are a collective national good, rather than for individual exploitation. President Masisi praised the 'bottom up' approach and referred to the people of Botswana as the country's most valuable resource. Of the relationship between this and democracy, President Masisi said that the profit made from the resources is invested into social services, ensuring everyone benefits and further stressed the mutual reliance of democracy and development in Botswana. As he put it, 'our diamonds, our diamonds, our diamonds, are for development'.

Throughout his eloquent address, the President consistently referred to the mutually supporting relationship between democracy and development in Botswana. However, I was left confused as to whether President Masisi's lecture was evidence of Botswana returning to its previous commitment to democratic ideals, or whether the President was merely continuing to play up to the success story narratives.

However, President Masisi in both the last part of his talk, and in the Q&A, engaged more frankly with Botswana's imperfections. When concluding the lecture, President Masisi iterated that Botswana remains committed to strengthening institutions which play an oversight, including free press and an independent judiciary, and is actively seeking to strengthen existing anti-corruption legislation. The topic of challenges facing Botswana was a line of questioning continued in the Q&A, with President Masisi openly acknowledging Botswana's need to diversify its economy and combat youth unemployment.

President Masisi was also equally forthcoming in acknowledging the challenges facing social development in Botswana, such as violence against women, and gender inequality. The President admitted the need for improvements in this area and discussed the need to empower females, to ensure they aren't 'choice disabled'.

When questioned about the decline of democracy under his predecessor, President Masisi proved more reluctant, particularly on matters relating to the security services and authoritarianism. However, despite his hesitations, the President did reveal that his reasons for firing the former Director General of the Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services, Isaac Kgosi, were 'so good they cannot be shared', but that they were driven by a commitment to good governance. The President further admitted that he would not be continuing along the lines of the Khama government and said that more needed to be done to challenge corruption in Botswana.



President Masisi takes a selfie with ASC Student Joseph Arulefela

All in all, the prospects of democratisation and development remain among the most central and open questions in post-colonial Africa, and President Masisi's lecture on the Botswana story provided an important counter narrative to the prevailing afro-pessimism. Further to this, President Masisi's lecture, and the further discussion of Botswana's challenges, acted as a clear reminder that it is important to see democracy and development as oscillating journeys, requiring constant evaluation, rather than linear tick-box procedures.

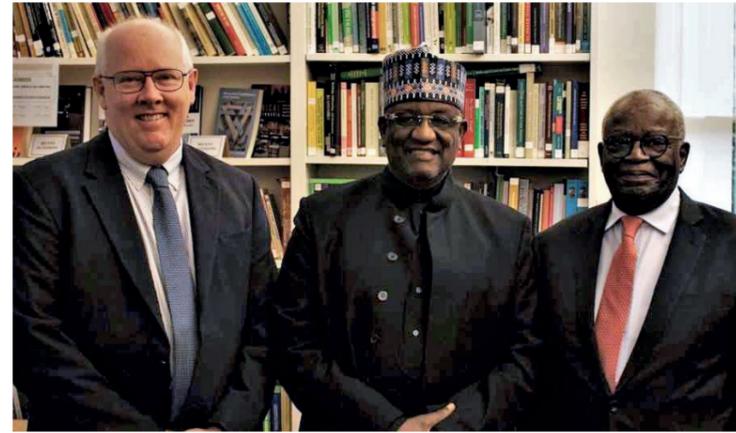
Watch video of event on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrFdvLoi1k&t=355>



ASC staff and students with President Masisi of Botswana after his lecture



Students share a laugh with President Bongo Ondimba



Head of OSGA, Prof Tim Power meets Alhaji Indimi and Prof Ibrahim Gambari, before a lecture delivered by Indimi



Prof William Beinart, former Rhodes Professor of Race Relations introducing Prof Ibrahim Gambari at the inauguration of the IAB



Vice President Osinbajo delivers lecture at St Antony's. Photo Credit Novo Isioro.



The audience listening to President Masisi



Head of OSGA, Professor Tim Power, Dr Peter Drobac, Director of the Skoll Centre, Said Business School, President Masisi of Botswana and Prof Wale Adebaniwi of ASC



VP Osinbajo and ASC Lecturer, Olly Owen



President Mahama chatting with Tammy Brophy, Chair, Oxford Africa Business Alliance; Ian Rogan, MBA Programme Director, SBS. Danielle Del Vicario is in the foreground



H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba discusses sustainable transformation in Gabon

Coralie Lolliot

“[Gabon is] a country endowed with exceptional natural resources and committed to developing them in a way which unlocks value for economy and society and also protect the natural environment” – President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon

On a late afternoon in Oxford, Tuesday, 9th of October 2018, the African Studies Centre and the Saïd Business School (SBS) jointly hosted a conversation with H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, the President of Gabon. On the day, town and gown joined in discussing Gabon's most complex challenges – such as demographic change, natural resources, food security, climate change and technological disruption. The Dean of the SBS, Professor Peter Tufano, the Peter Moores Dean and Professor of Finance, formally welcomed the president to Oxford. The event started promptly with a short speech by President Bongo Ondimba and was followed by an audience Q&A moderated by Professor Wale Adebawwi, Director of the African Studies Centre, and the Rhodes Professor of Race Relations.

Having previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs Minister of Defence and as a representative in the National Assembly, Ondimba has been President since October 2009. In Oxford, he focused on sharing his experiences as the head of a country with exceptional natural resources. President Bongo Ondimba in his opening speech emphasised it was his great pleasure to be at Oxford to share his experiences as head of state of ‘a country endowed with exceptional natural resources and committed to developing them in a way which unlocks value for economy and society and also protect the natural environment.’ The president explored Gabon's complex challenges and expressed the urgent need for transformation. He recognized his key political asset to be his own personal determination and ambition to move from an oil dependent economy

vulnerable to external shocks to a fully diversified competitive economy with class capability in forestry sustainable tourism, mining energy and new technology. Furthermore, he particularly emphasized his position as being committed to develop Gabonese exceptional natural resources in a way which values economy and society but also protects the natural environment. In fact, protecting the country's natural resource has been a key political focus for Ondimba, as evidenced by his instrumental role in launching the Africa Adaptation Initiative, which seeks to mobilise funds for climate change adaptation projects.

President Ondimba expressed his commitment to diversifying the economy away from oil whilst preserving the country's vast rainforests and wildlife. Interestingly, Ondimba straightforwardly admitted the difficulties he faced when addressing the force of inertia in Gabonese politics. During the Q&A session, Prof Adebawwi warned him that coming to Oxford meant that he will face challenging questions about his stewardship in Gabon. As expected one of the questions raised by the moderator and a student in the audience was on his family's monopoly of power and term limit. The Gabonese president defended his position. ‘Term limits, I will say, frankly, that sounds sexy. But it isn't working. When you go into your second term, you no longer have any authority because people I know that you are leaving.... No one listens to you anymore.’ He said he had discussed with many African leaders who agree with him. The only reason they don't say so, he added, was because they want to please ‘you guys here’ (meaning the West). ‘They really don't believe

in it.... I don't believe that term limits improve democracy.’ He pointed to the absence of term limit in some European countries, such as in the UK, (which is a parliamentary democracy) and the absence of term limits for parliamentarians in Africa as reasons to defend the need to remove term limit in Gabon.

Obviously, the good examples of regular peaceful transfer of power in the continent including in Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, South Africa, Nigeria, etc. and the perils of president-for-life have failed to convince the Gabonese president of the value of democratic change and the dangers of the opposite. When Adebawwi pushed back by asking how many years would be enough for a president in Africa to be successful, President Bongo Ondimba stated that ‘it depends on the situation in (each) country’.

Watch video of event of YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpMiVUJ67HE>



Dean of Saïd Business School, Peter Tufano, welcoming President Ondimba as the president and Wale Adebawwi listen

VIP Events

President Mahama of Ghana reflects on democracy and elections in Africa

Samuel Koranteng Anim (MSc African Studies, 2018-19)



President Mahama and African Studies students

The fate of democracy today is written and talked about in urgent tones. Paradoxically, more elections are held now than ever before, but civil liberties are declining. One explanation for this is that the spirit of liberal democracy is being subverted by its letter – elections. Compared with other democratizing regions, Africa stands the greatest threat of losing its minimal democratic standards. The implications of this for the continent's development are severe and deserve our urgent attention. In light of this imperative, the African Studies Centre and the Saïd Business School joined efforts to host H.E John Dramani Mahama, former president of Ghana, who gave a lecture on May 10, 2019 on the theme of ‘Democracy and Elections in Contemporary Africa.’

Mr. Mahama's address focused on the relevance of democracy to socioeconomic development on the African continent, emerging threats to democracy on the continent, and the measures being taken by state and non-state actors to address these concerns. These key points were vividly illustrated by President Mahama's experiences as a former president; his roles on observer missions in various African countries span from negotiating Yahya Jammeh's step-down in the Gambia to meeting professional hackers in Nigeria in an effort to find the corrective measures to cyber threats to electoral quality.

Following the address was a vibrant Q&A session moderated by Professor Wale Adebawwi, Director of the African Studies Centre. The debates and questions raised revolved mostly around the concerns that President Mahama expressed in his lecture as well as pressing socioeconomic questions posed by several Africans and Africanists in the audience.

Beyond the animated discussion, it would be more beneficial to the continent and its populations to match the rhetoric expressed by Mahama and members of the audience with concrete action to address why the democratic dividend has eluded most African citizens. We must ask how the state of marginality and disempowerment of African people can be resolved through democratic processes such as elections. Pertinent issues such as voter apathy, the truncated link between citizens and their agents deserve serious attention before they undermine the peace and stability that most countries enjoy on the continent.



Frewyeni Kidane of the University's Development Office and President Mahama

'Africa must invest in her youth'

Ameena Gurib-Fakim, ex-president of Mauritius



Ameena Gurib-Fakim, ex-President of Mauritius and ASC Students

On May 30th, the African Studies Centre and Africa Oxford Initiative (AfOx) co-hosted former president Ameena Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius, to deliver a lecture titled 'Driving Africa's prosperity through sustainable and innovative practices' in the Nissan Lecture Theatre at St Antony's College. Before the lecture, President Gurib-Fakim was welcomed at the ASC where she met with African Studies staff and students. After the lecture, she was hosted at a reception attended by Oxford University Vice Chancellor Louise Richardson, followed by dinner at St Cross College.



Ameena Gurib-Fakim, ex-President of Mauritius and Dr Liz Fouksman



Prof Miles Tendi explains a point to Ameena Gurib-Fakim during her visit to the ASC as Prof Kevin Marsh of AfOx listens



Ameena Gurib-Fakim, Oxford VC, Prof Louise Richardson (fourth left) and others at the Drinks Reception for Gurib-Fakim at St Cross College



Prof David Pratten and Ameena Gurib-Fakim during her visit to the African Studies Centre

Finding Thomas Kanza in Oxford

Miles Larmer

Studying African history at Oxford University provides entirely unexpected opportunities to engage with unexplored aspects of the continent's history, that equally serve as reminders that many of the pioneers of African studies have been African intellectuals themselves, often writing and acting in exile. In January 2018 I received an email from the librarian of St. Antony's College, putting me in touch with the family of the late Thomas Kanza, seeking advice on how to manage his private papers and personal library, in his house in north Oxford. As a historian of the Democratic Republic of Congo, I was surprised that Kanza had lived much of his life in Oxford, but I was certainly aware of his political importance.

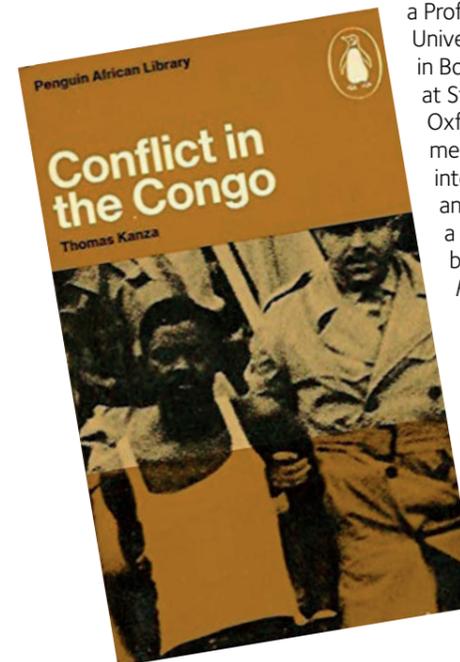
Thomas Kanza was a leading figure in the movement for the independence of the Belgian Congo, and a pioneer in its intellectual life. One of the country's first university graduates, he served as the Congo's United Nations representative until 1964, in the tumultuous period following the country's independence in 1960. Having been appointed by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, it was Kanza who appealed unsuccessfully to both superpowers to protect Lumumba following his arrest by the Congolese military in September 1960 - Lumumba was murdered by Katangese and Belgian soldiers, with US approval, four months later. Kanza thereafter served as a Congolese representative to the UK from 1962 to 1964, but - having sided with rebel forces against the western-backed governments of Moïse Tshombe (1964-65) and his successor General Joseph Mobutu (from 1965) - he fled to the West and sought sanctuary from Mobutu's government. He held a series of academic positions in the US, including as a Professor of Politics at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Kanza also studied at St. Antony's College Oxford and was an associate member of the college intermittently between 1973 and 1984. He published a number of important books, most notably *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba: Conflict in the Congo* (1972). Kanza remained in political exile for many years, but again played an active role in politics as the Mobutu regime's grip on power diminished in the early 1990s. He served as a minister in the government of Laurent Kabila in



Thomas Kanza

the late 1990s and was Congo's ambassador to Sweden when he died in October 2004.

Having been invited to survey Kanza's papers and library by Mrs Kanza, I was struck by the richness of an intellectual life lived mostly in exile: the vast range of his interests, reflected in his library, his correspondence with leading Africanist scholars in the US and Europe and the many drafts of published and unpublished manuscripts. It was a daunting responsibility to decide, along with the Kanza family, how to manage and preserve these documents. A collection of Kanza's most important papers, mainly dating from the early-to-mid 1960s, has been transferred to Oxford's Bodleian Library, where they will be available to researchers from around the world analysing Congolese political history. We will seek to ensure that Congolese scholars themselves have access to these papers by electronic means. A significant part of his huge library has meanwhile been shipped to Nairobi where it will form a special collection at the Jesuit Historical Institute in Africa, a growing repository for Africanist scholarship on the continent. This represents at least a partial return to Africa of a brilliant mind who, in his many years in the West, never stopped thinking about the challenges facing the continent and the role of intellectuals in overcoming them.



Notes from the field

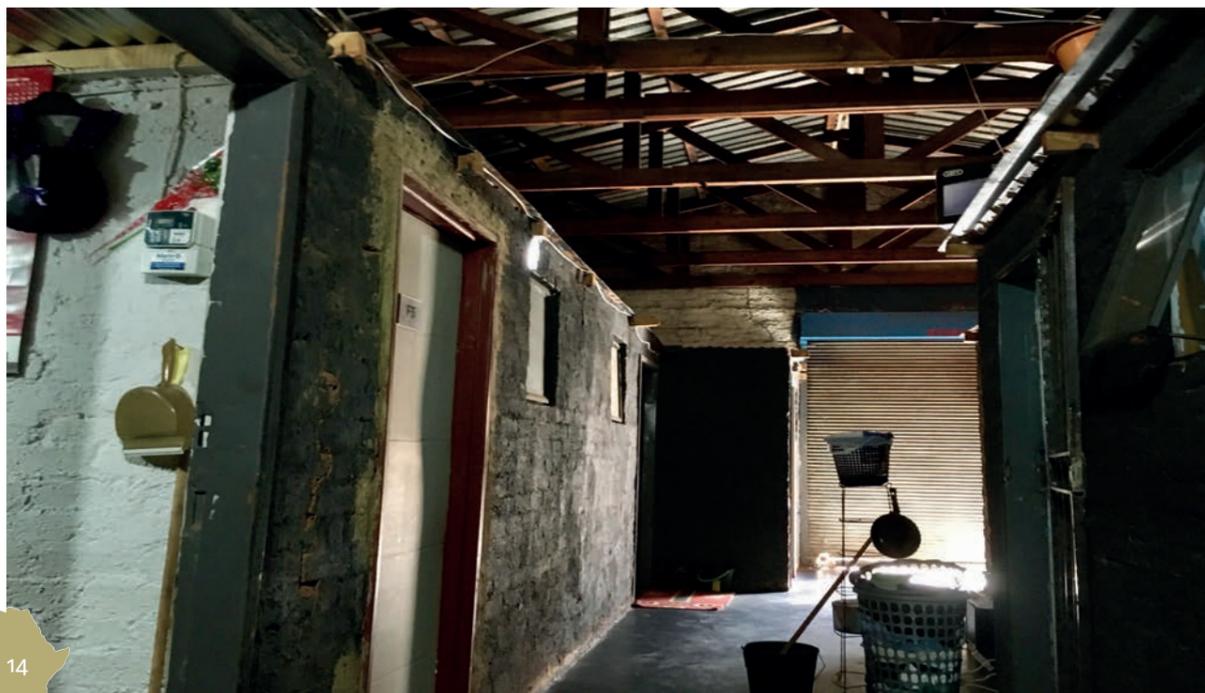
Liz Fouksman

As I write this, I am finishing two months of fieldwork in South Africa, in a part of inner-city Johannesburg called Jeppestown. Jeppe was once an industrial hub, full of warehouses, bulk-goods stores, small factories and workshops. Most of the factories and warehouses are now shutdown, but they are not unoccupied. They are still filled with people, people who have come to the big city looking for work and who could not otherwise afford Johannesburg rent. They live in small plywood- or brick-partitioned rooms put up inside these once-industrial buildings, all the occupants sharing one tap and a toilet. While the walls of these rooms might look dilapidated or haphazard on the outside, inside they contain small worlds in a tiny space: beds piled up with carefully color-matched pillows and blankets, a cupboard of neatly arranged kitchen necessities, a print on the wall, sometimes an old TV. Some of these residents are squatters, but many pay for rent and electricity, though they are hard pressed to say whether those collecting the rent are the buildings' official owners or 'hijackers' who have claimed an ignored property. Evictions are common, carried out by private security firms at the behest of the official owners or the city government. Sometimes one passes a crowd of people with all of their furniture and belongings standing on the sidewalk, gazing at the building they called home until just a few minutes ago, while armed men in uniforms seal off the doors.

My research focuses on the long-term unemployed or precariously employed, and most of the residents of Jeppestown are exactly that: people looking for a 'proper

job' while making do with occasional gigs in construction, working as a waitress a few times a year when a big hotel needs extra hands, or selling airtime in a local shop, while also walking through the city dropping off dozens of printed-out CVs a week and then waiting for the phone to ring. There is something deeply melancholic about speaking to people about their longings for traditional, stable, well-paid employment inside long-shut factories and warehouses. Yet despite the fact that some of my interlocutors have spent years vainly looking for a job, many remain optimistic. Often they insist that hard work and the right attitude, perhaps together with the wherewithal to start a business, will ensure that they will one day get ahead.

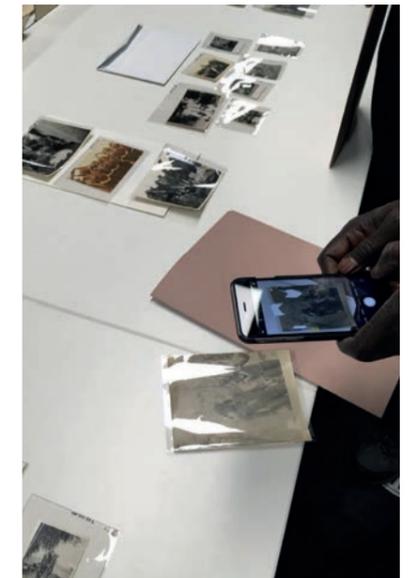
Indeed, Jeppestown's geography makes it a perfect place to probe attitudes towards inequality and social mobility. It shares a border with Maboneng, an aggressively gentrified neighborhood of hipster bars and expensive cars. Most of my interlocutors have been to Maboneng, but when I asked them about the contrast between it and Jeppestown just next door, most told me that it does not bother them. In fact, a few insisted that they were inspired by seeing the life they can one day have, when they have worked hard enough, for long enough. And when I asked them if it is luck or effort that leads to wealth, most of my informants told me that it was hard work. Knowing the low rates of social mobility, high inequality and endemic and high rates of unemployment in South Africa, such optimism can be difficult to hear.



Informally constructed rooms inside a shutdown warehouse in Jeppestown, Johannesburg.



Workshop in Juba in June 2018



Network members consulting South Sudan collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum

South Sudan Museum Network

Zoe Cormack

The South Sudan Museum Network is an international research network connecting academics, museum practitioners and heritage stakeholders to develop knowledge about South Sudanese museum collections across Europe.

The Network is the first initiative to connect these dispersed collections with South Sudanese communities, addressing not only the collections' academic significance, but also their potential contribution to developing more inclusive understandings of South Sudanese history and identity. Key focuses are on the history of the collections, their display, accessibility and future agendas for research and engagement.

The first phase of this project was supported by the British Institute in Eastern Africa (2015–2016). Zoe Cormack conducted a scoping study of major South Sudanese collections in European and Russian Museums. The findings of this study are available as a working inventory of South Sudanese museum collections in Europe and Russia. The second phase was supported by an AHRC network grant, "New Explorations into South Sudanese collections in European Museums" (2017–2018). The principle aims of this phase were to:

- 1) Collaboratively develop knowledge about collections of South Sudanese material culture in Europe to produce more intellectually rigorous understandings of South Sudan's past.
- 2) Connect institutions holding major collections with each other and with South Sudanese academics and practitioners, stimulating meaningful partnerships between different stakeholders in South Sudan's cultural heritage.
- 3) Bring new historical perspectives into research on ethnographic collections and artefacts.
- 4) Raise the profile of South Sudan's material cultural heritage in public and academic networks in Europe and South Sudan.

The AHRC funding was used to hold three international workshops in Durham, Oxford and Juba. These workshops addressed the history of collections from South Sudan, ways of working with the objects and priorities for reconnecting the collections with communities in South Sudan. They brought together curators from museums in Europe and Russia holding significant South Sudanese collections, academic specialists and South Sudanese heritage practitioners, creatives and diaspora.

There is a dedicated website collating information about the network and with further resources, including reports of the three workshops. A collaborative book resulting from the AHRC network is currently in progress with an estimate publication date at the end of 2019.

Zoe Cormack participated in the British Academy Summer Showcase 2018 with an exhibit about South Sudanese art and material culture in Italian museums. The display invited visitors to consider the history and possible futures for African collections in European museums. It drew heavily on discussions from the South Sudan Museum Network and research conducted in Rome and Venice during a fellowship at the British School at Rome.

Network participants developed a diaspora film workshop at the Pitt Rivers Museum in November 2018. Over two days, South Sudanese diaspora members in the UK created a film exploring the Pitt Rivers Museum's objects and photographs and what they mean for community members today. The film (available online at <https://vimeo.com/306151198>) was sponsored by Mellon Foundation via The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) Global South Visiting Professor scheme that facilitated Prof Jok Madut Jok's affiliation to the Museum in 2018. Film training was provided by Film Oxford.

Several other future activities are currently in development. Contact Zoe Cormack for more information.

Public outreach and rail heritage

Oliver Owen



Oxford University's Social Science Division has a new programme of knowledge exchange grants designed to support engagement activities with publics and communities; this year Dr Olly Owen and Professor Wale Adebaniwi have been recipients, for a project on public outreach and rail heritage in Nigeria. This project seeks to take work on infrastructural development as part of the Governing the African Transition programme, an Oxford Martin School programme of which ASC members are a part, outside the academy. The project partners with Legacy 1995, a leading Lagos-based heritage NGO with a network of members and volunteers, to look at the way in which rail heritage is understood, interpreted, preserved or re-purposed, and what are the conservation options in an era of new investment and rail developments. Legacy 1995 already collaborate with the Nigeria Railway Corporation as custodians of a number of historic buildings and rolling stock, and operate the Jaekel House museum, the 1930s residence of the Director of Nigerian Railways which they restored. The project involves collaboration on a survey of historic rail infrastructure, a visit by Legacy and NRC personnel to interact with the UK transport heritage sector, and a project-end exhibition at Jaekel House showcasing the outputs and exploring issues of past and future imagination.



The Lagos Studies Association Conference 2018

Tim Livsey

It was my pleasure to attend the Third Lagos Studies Association (LSA) Conference at the University of Lagos in June 2018. The LSA is a pioneering organisation that brings together scholars and stakeholders with interests in Lagos, and Nigeria more broadly. The annual LSA conference, which is now held annually in Lagos, offers an outstanding opportunity for delegates from all over the world to meet, discuss Nigerian history and culture, and, crucially, to engage with the work of scholars based in Nigeria.

The conference, as usual, saw much more than just scholarly presentations. The University of Lagos buildings on the shores of the lagoon were brought to life by film screenings, dance performances, and panel discussions. A more lively conference would be hard to imagine. The high spirits amongst delegates were assisted by delicious breakfasts, lunches, and dinners; and by Nigeria's spirited performances at the 2018 World Cup, which continued throughout the conference. The simultaneous roar from – apparently – all University of Lagos buildings when Nigeria scored against Iceland was a really memorable moment.

I was delighted to participate in a panel celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Akin Mabounje's landmark monograph *Urbanization in Nigeria*, and in a panel discussion with Hon. Adekunle Alli, a renowned Lagos historian from outside of the academy, as well as in a panel marking the publication of my own book, *Nigeria's University Age*.

For the first time, a preconference workshop, aimed primarily at students and scholars based in Nigeria, focused on developing the interconnectedness of the Nigerian humanities. The preconference included a wide range of sessions facilitated by scholars from within and beyond Nigeria, including

sessions on applying to graduate programmes, academic journal article and book publishing, and grant writing. It was a fantastic idea – the kind of thing that seems obvious once someone else has thought of it. A range of tours of Lagos ran after the formal conclusion of the conference as well, including an illuminating tour focused on the eviction of informal settlement dwellers in Lagos, supported by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

The Lagos Studies Association and its annual conference offers a really exciting model for future directions in African studies. It focuses on linking together scholars with similar interests but based in different global regions, bringing them into conversation, and creating new possibilities, all the while with an overriding emphasis on accessibility for academics based in Africa. LSA President Saheed Aderinto, of Western Carolina University, deserves the highest possible praise for his pioneering work, as do the LSA's other officers and directors. What's particularly exciting about the LSA is that it is still so young. I can't wait to see the future joint research projects, articles, and books written by scholars brought together by the LSA. This is what African studies in the twenty first century should look like – long live the LSA!

Bearing Witness – Kwibuka 25

Julia Viebach

Funded by the University of Oxford's Public Engagement Seed Fund

What does it mean to survive genocide? Why is it important to remember those who perished? And how is it possible to remake lives after such a horrific experience? Bearing Witness seeks to explore those questions drawing on oral history methodology, artwork and community curation. It seizes this year's 25th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda as opportunity to provide a platform for remembering, to support genocide survivors and to share their stories with the wider public in the UK. Through case displays at the Pitt Rivers Museum curated by survivors and videos featuring their life stories, Bearing Witness offers a comprehensive account of meaning-making after genocide and mass atrocity. These activities are complemented by the traveling exhibition Kwibuka Rwanda 25 that tells the story of survivors working at genocide memorials in Rwanda and of how they commemorate their dead loved ones. Bearing Witness raises awareness of the Genocide and in doing so fights apathy towards the distant suffering of 'others' in times of heightened xenophobia and rising right-wing populism. Bearing Witness was shortlisted for this year's Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards.



Kwibuka Rwanda 25 Touring Exhibition at the national 25th commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Nottingham, May 2019. Photo credit Julia Viebach

Memory figurations: Displacement, trauma and memory amongst the Rwandan diaspora in the UK

Julia Viebach

Funded by the OUP John Fell Fund

In 2019, Rwanda commemorates the 25th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwandan diaspora communities all around the world, including in the UK, take part in events to remember the victims and raise awareness of the genocide in their respective host countries. Despite an evident trend in official 'diaspora commemoration' of the 1994 Genocide, globally, only little is known about this phenomenon. It is therefore both timely and innovative to ask how diaspora survivors remember the Genocide. What practices and rituals have they developed? What objects do they use to keep those who perished alive in their memories? 'Memory Figurations' will use life story interviews to elucidate how both memory and the trauma of the Genocide are recirculated, reformulated and remade in survivors' everyday lives in the UK. We currently witness a growing number of survivor diaspora communities dislocated by war and genocide in many parts of the world. 'Memory Figurations' will shed light on the relationship between memory, trauma, displacement and remaking lives in the diaspora. It has the potential to serve as a model for the analysis of survivor diaspora globally.



Teaching and researching the security sector in Africa

Miles Tendi

The 2019–2020 academic year was my second in the African Studies Centre (ASC). The ASC is an exceptional place to teach and do research on Africa. I was Course Director this year and basked in my constantly stimulating engagement with highly talented students from all around the world, who come to the ASC with a genuinely profound desire to do African Studies.

I spent time developing a substantial edited handbook on Zimbabwean politics for Oxford University Press. My co-editors in this project are Jocelyn Alexander (Oxford Department of International Development) and JoAnn McGregor (University of Sussex). It has been a richly rewarding experience, editing colleagues' work and learning from them about their various understandings of and approaches to the country's politics.



Miles chats with former and current students

My attention has also centred on researching and writing a book on recent coups d'état in Africa. Coups d'état occur less frequently than they did in the 1960s to 1990s period, but they continue to be an important feature of politics in Africa. How the, at times, 'ambiguous' nature of recent coups d'état interacts with defined anti-coup regimes established by bodies such as the African Union (AU) is also an evolving and important area for study. Thinking and writing about these themes for my book usefully complemented some of my teaching for a new option course – Politics of the Security Sector in Africa – that I taught this past academic year.

African Theatre in London

Tiziana Morosetti

From Wole Soyinka's *The Invention* (1959), premiered at the Royal Court, to Athol Fugard's *The Blood Knot* (1961), revived this year at the Orange Tree Theatre, London theatres have showcased a variety of productions and plays by artists and companies of African origin. Much is still to be done to effectively address diversity and inequality in the theatre industry, but the appointments, in 2018, of Kwame Kwei-Armah as Artistic Director at the Young Vic and Dipo Agboluaje as Writer in Residence at the National Theatre are important steps towards the mainstream acknowledgement of the contribution of African (and BME) playwrights to British theatre. My edited collection *Africa on the Contemporary London Stage* (Palgrave 2018) was born out of the need to identify and acknowledge, in the increasing presence of Black artists on the British stage, the specific contribution of African theatre compared to other BME theatre traditions.

While pioneering companies such as Tiata Fahodzi and Talawa have addressed (with changing approaches) the African diaspora in its widest sense and have been instrumental in supporting Black theatre in the UK, our book focuses exclusively on the African contribution, thus departing from Black British theatre studies that usually encompass African theatre alongside Afro-Caribbean and Asian. The chapters and interviews in the book, which brings together established and early-career academics, as well as theatre practitioners currently active in London, begin with an examination of earlier 20th-century representations of Africa in British theatre to then outline the impact of playwrights like Soyinka, Fugard, Biyi Bandele and Bola Agbaje, or more recent companies such as Spora Stories, Two Gents and Iroko Theatre, on the articulation of African cultures on the British stage. The challenges and opportunities of the London stage are examined with the awareness that the capital cannot but lead the way in a theatre industry that, while increasingly receptive of issues of diversity and representation, cannot but raise questions as to the fate and survival of non-mainstream, off-west end theatre when it comes to the drastic financial cuts to this business. If the refurbishment and foundation of (new) theatres in London testify to the relevance of a still thriving industry, the risk that Black and African artists in particular could be (again) left out should definitely not be underestimated.



Finding Fable: Unexpected rewards of the REF

Danielle Del Vicario

Three years ago, Jonny Steinberg's *A Man of Good Hope* (*AMOGH*) was adapted for the stage by Cape Town-based opera ensemble Isango in conjunction with London's Young Vic Theatre. The book and play tell the life history of a Somali migrant who encountered ferocious xenophobic violence in South Africa in May 2008. Since premiering in 2016, the play has toured internationally to much acclaim and returned to London to show at the Royal Opera House this Spring.

Last December, Jonny (currently on leave in Yale) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions asked me to assist with a case study on the 'impact' of *AMOGH*, to submit in the next round of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the UK-wide assessment system for quality of research in higher education institutions. Encompassing publications, funding, impact and probably a host of other denominators unknown to me, the REF can seem a daunting and normative exercise in box-ticking, and my initial brief here was no exception: to develop a survey for the play's April–May run at the Royal Opera House and to gather past reviews and social media reactions. A new DPhil student with a serious problem about saying no, I agreed despite having never designed (or really believed in) a survey in my life.

In the end, we were able to take a much more qualitative approach, focusing on knowledge production and the

Filming Fable, Part One. Photos by Leon Puplett (Young Vic Taking Part).



afterlives of Jonny's research. I was fortunate in being able to interview members of Isango about the difficult and emotional process of creating the play. *AMOGH* was the first time Isango (known for taking western 'classics' and giving them a South African twist) took an African story—of one of the darkest episodes of their own country's recent history—and adapted it for national and international consumption, creating a highly moving and resonant piece performed in the wake of Trump's election, the Brexit referendum and the Christchurch attacks.

But what is really interesting is where the story went next. In a preliminary Twitter search, I stumbled across *Fable*, an outreach film project—unknown to Jonny—run parallel to *AMOGH* by the Young Vic and Isango, in collaboration with over 50 young people in primary schools in South Africa, the UK and the US. *Fable* offers a fictionalized story of how a group of students create a play about the 'truth of immigration' to enter an international theatre festival. Though the fictional students (played by real students at the target schools) are visibly diverse, none know any 'real stories' about immigration. They therefore decide to tell the story of *Fable*, a young immigrant girl from Sunland who joined their class and then left again. In trying to reconstruct her story, they debate racial stereotypes, their own failure to connect with her before she left and the ethics of '[making] a play about someone's life without knowing it's all true.'



London students rehearse and film *Fable*, Part One. Photos by Leon Puplett (Young Vic Taking Part)

It's not often that we as researchers see ourselves performed on stage (Jonny pops up as a narrative character in Isango's play) and it is even less often that we take the time to speak with people who have taken and revamped our research, making it matter in new ways. Ultimately then, our impact study was a humbling one—a reminder that the debates we have in the academy also take place outside and that it is possible for us to cross that boundary. It was perhaps also a reminder that to find these collaborations, we have to step outside the bounds of archives, surveys and formal interviews to take seriously something like a Twitter search as we do our research!

Del Vicario is a DPhil candidate in History. She is an alumna of the ASC MSc programme (2017–2018 class).

My fellowship at Oxford University is a dream come true

Dele Momodu



Momodu (fourth from right) listening as Arunma Oteh, former World Bank Treasurer and fellow of SBS, St Antony's and ASC, chats with President Mahama, after his lecture on 12 May, 2019

If you know a bit about my background you will understand and appreciate this headline. I grew up in the university town of Ile-Ife, Nigeria, very similar to Oxford but totally bereft of the modern facilities and trends we find here at Oxford. We had to rely mainly on the raw brilliance and ingenuity of our teachers who suffered from a shocking dearth of resources, from books, to even paper. Of course, my studies took place at a time when the computer age was in its infancy in Nigeria and a mouse was a rodent that wreaked havoc with the lives of human beings. My primary school was so rural and localised that it had to borrow the name, Local Authority Primary School, Ile-Ife.

I loved education and had to do everything possible to attend schools. My father died when I was barely 13 years old and my poor unlettered mum had to take over with the meagre profit she made from selling food and drinks at a small canteen. Life was harsh and brutish, but we never gave up.

My dream was to be a teacher, probably marry a teacher, and live happily thereafter. To this end, university education was an absolute necessity to me, and I gravitated towards the

University of Ife at every opportunity I got. I bagged a first degree in Yoruba language in 1982, at the age of 22, and completed a Master's in Literature-in-English in 1988. This feat was the first of such, it was simply an unheard combination ever in Nigeria, but getting a job became impossible. Compounding my problem was the fact that the military government in Nigeria at the time did not see any reason to make education a priority. So, things merely progressed from bad to worse in the education sector.

I hovered around the University in frustration until I stumbled on a job in Lagos as a Staff Writer at the African Concord magazine. Fame and relative fortune, compared to where I came from, smiled at me. I became editor of *Classique* magazine in Lagos and later founded OVATION International magazine (see: <http://www.ovationinternational.com/>), which is Africa's most successful celebrity magazine. I am the publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine. But I never forgot my first love, academia.

31 years after my last stint in a classroom, I applied for a fellowship at Oxford and was pleasantly surprised when I received the letter of offer,



Momodu in a chat with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Nigeria in 2003

which I immediately accepted. For my fellowship I am working on a project entitled, "Celebrity Journalism and the Social Media in Contemporary Africa."

The challenge was how to multitask as a journalist, writer, businessman, politician and world traveller. But, mercifully, the African Studies Centre at Oxford University availed me with the best facilities and flexibility possible. For me, it has all been like a dream, and so surreal, but it has given me added impetus and encouragement about rekindling my academic interest. Indeed, I hope to do further courses here and become an Oxford ambassador.

Dregan Mikki

Visiting Oxford ASC

David Everatt (Wits School of Governance, Johannesburg, South Africa)

With the good fortune of an Oppenheimer Academic Exchange award, I was able to spend a lovely month at the tail end of Hilary term with the Centre. It was a small gift in time, to be taken out of the administrative and management joys of running the Wits School of Governance and spend a month in my old spot in the Bodleian, attending seminars and other events, writing, and meeting faces both old and new.

I completed an entire chapter for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Global South Youth Studies*. Reading this, that may sound like small beer – for a School manager, I promise you, it is closer to miraculous (and a moment of real happiness). I presented twice to ASC seminars, one on the large Afro-Asian cities project I'm participating in at the School of Governance, and another on the forthcoming South African national and provincial elections. I was happy to meet up with a range of ASC staff either at events or for meals, including hearing about Zimbabwe, Angola, Nigeria, Zambia and elsewhere. I even went to talk at Chatham House ... but can't tell you what I said!

I was a student at Oxford in the late 1980s. The anti-apartheid struggle was at its peak, and I suspect those of us studying South Africa felt that we were by some margin doing the most important work, either understanding how apartheid came to be and/or designing the post-apartheid future. 'Africa' was far less important to us than South Africa, and every event we organized attracted media attention, student participation and general local support, which underscored the view we had of our subject area. Even when Graca Machel, then Mozambican Education Minister, came to address us – we all talked South Africa! I think we had a rather arrogant and inaccurate view of the world, and South African exceptionalism has been put rather firmly in its place. That was possibly the most striking feature of the month I spent with the Centre, the very clear sense that the focus was African – all of Africa, not just the currently 'sexy' parts of our continent.

What remains a challenge – at Oxford as everywhere else – is cross-disciplinary linkages going beyond good intentions to co-teaching and supervision. The Oxford Centre for Migration is also doing fascinating work on *inter alia* African cities, and I had a lovely chat with Prof Michael Keith – it is unfortunate that disciplinary boundaries, with their attendant teaching schedules, non/availability of staff and students and so on mean that all our universities continue to battle to become genuinely trans (or multi) disciplinary, something which goes to the core of the ASC.

That said, what really seems to make Oxford more African now is the Centre itself, which links visitors and students to seminars ranging from the old southern

African seminar to others such as North East Africa, and to other centres and opportunities, whether elsewhere in the UK or beyond. With a nicely equipped library, regular communication, really generous and supportive staff – academic and administrative – the ASC has created a centre of gravity that was previously lacking, and I'm sure is of immense benefit to all African scholars. Merely knowing on Monday morning that a seminar is occurring during the week – on a topic you know little about, but which sounds interesting – and being able to pop in, meet new people, hear very different approaches – these are hugely important for students (and academics) to get out of our disciplinary and often geographic pigeonholes.

My gratitude to the Centre is enormous, and I hope we at Wits are able to return the favour any time any of you happens to be passing by!

Conference of Racialisation

CONFERENCE
27th – 28th June, 2019

Racialisation and Publicness in Africa and the African Diaspora Conference
African Studies Centre, University of Oxford, UK

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
Professor Achille Mbembe, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Professor Faye V. Harrison, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Venue: St Antony's College, 62 Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6JF, United Kingdom



Joy Owen: TORCH Global South Visiting Professor

A single mother to a toddler, Professor Joy Owen also heads the Anthropology department at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Prior to her employment at UFS, she was the head of the Anthropology department and the Deputy Dean of Humanities (Teaching and Learning) at Rhodes University (Grahamstown) during the #feesmustfall movement in higher education institutions in South Africa.

With diverse interests including critical pedagogy, the art of anthropological fieldwork, ethnographic writing, social capital, intersectionality and transnational migration, Prof Owen's monograph on Congolese migrants in Muizenberg, Cape Town (2015) explored Congolese transnational social networks and how these supported the 'progress' of individual members. Her more recent research projects consider the decolonial 'project' in higher education in South Africa, motherhood in the academy and the narratives of contemporary 'self-exiled' transmigrant South Africans.

Professor Joy Owen is visiting Oxford in Trinity Term 2019 as one of the TORCH Global South Visiting Professors. Her academic host is Professor Wale Adebani, director of the African Studies Centre of the University of Oxford. During her stay, Professor Owen will be involved as a discussant for two panels at the conference 'Racialisation and Publicness in Africa and the African Diaspora', organised by the Oxford African Studies centre (27 and 28 June). She will also participate in other events within the University, including a workshop with students and academics within the University entitled, 'Identities: Personal, Local and Otherwise', 29 May, and a colloquium entitled 'Inscribing Biographies in Global South History' on 1 June.

My inspiring academic visit to Oxford: 'Elites and the politics of accountability in Africa'

Rogers Orock

My visit to Oxford in November 2018 was facilitated by an award of an African-Oxford Initiative (AFOX) grant to me and my host, Professor Wale Adebani, at the African Studies Centre (ASC). The main purpose was to enable us to finish work on our edited volume on 'Elites and the Politics of Accountability in Africa,' as well as to explore avenues for our continued intellectual collaboration, possibly leading to some form of institutional collaboration between the ASC and Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand in the future. Personally, I am also doing some work on colonialism and chieftaincy issues in British Southern Cameroon and I hoped to take this opportunity to consult the library holdings at the ASC and the School of Anthropology and Ethnography at Oxford.

My stay at the ASC and Oxford was my first. It turned out to be very inspiring and highly rewarding for me. Professor Adebani and many of his colleagues at the ASC, including Professor David Pratten, Professor Miles Tendi and Dr Olly Owen, were all exceedingly kind to me with several invitations to lunches and dinners, all of which offered many opportunities for engaging and enriching discussions on old and new questions in African Studies. I also benefited from the good hospitality of other colleagues in Anthropology at Oxford, including Dr Thomas Cousins and Professor David Zeitlyn, who is also a fellow Cameroonist and who first suggested the idea of this visit to me when we first met in the summer of 2017. I am highly thankful to all of these wonderful colleagues at Oxford.

Undoubtedly, my stay was highly productive and filled with opportunities for new research initiatives. Professor Pratten and I, alongside Professor Paul Ugor in the US, agreed on—and have since begun—a project working toward a potential volume on popular cultural representations of extractive lives in the states of the Gulf of Guinea. We had planned to meet as a panel in Vancouver in November 2019, during the meetings of the American Anthropological Association. The complexities of registrations with the AAA have, unfortunately, not made this possible but we have continued working on this and we hope to meet as a group at a future date. With Professor Adebani, we finished work on the manuscript for the edited volume which is now under review and we have established a new collaborative project that examines another important element of elite social lives in Africa, their affinities and enmities. I was also able to finish writing and submitting an article on rumours and the politics of suspicion in French-Cameroon relations that has been accepted and is forthcoming in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. I am therefore very grateful to AFOX for this wonderful opportunity.

The transformation of the office of the Head of State in Nigeria

Aliyu Modibbo Umar

By 1 October 2019, Nigeria will have attained 59 years of independence from British colonial rule. Nigeria has held a lot of promise for its people and the international community. The expectations were based on what Nigeria as a country possesses: highly gifted people, abundant natural resources, good terrain and tolerable climate. The country has also had a fair experience of different forms of government: parliamentary to presidential systems, as well as both military and civilian government. She has also experimented with a unitary form of government with direct consequences which has pushed her back to adopting a federal system with the required impetus to manage its pluralism.

Central to all these is the role of the office of the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief which, though it has experienced many changes in terms of nomenclature, remains vested with the powers that are associated with awesome powers. Some have argued that, relative to existing constitutional, institutional and practical checks and balances,

the office of president of Nigeria is one of the most powerful offices in the world.

My research during my period as Academic Visitor at St Antony's College as well as a visiting fellow at the African Studies Centre, University of Oxford is giving me the opportunity to critically examine how the structure and functions of the office of the head of state/government has changed over the years; what features have distinguished the style and era of the presidents in office from Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa (1959-1966) to President Muhammadu Buhari (whose second term of four years as President of Nigeria ends in 2023); and in what way the office has affected the nature and quality of governance in Nigeria.

Dr Aliyu Modibbo Umar, PhD (UCLA), was the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria from 2007 and 2008. Before then, he was Federal Minister of State for Power and Mines and Minister of Commerce.

My mentoring experience at the ASC – Tunde Decker (AfOx Travel Grant Fellow, 2019)



The period I spent for my Africa-Oxford Fellowship at the African Studies Centre will remain a most significant time in my academic career for a long time to come. The relationships I built with very involving faculties at the Centre within a space of two months sharpened my research focus and provided opportunity to reappraise my research hypotheses. Professor Wale Adebani's reflective and enlightened mind disturbingly challenged my thoughts on the role I wish to play and the legacy I would wish to leave behind in academia. His illuminating pedagogy as I experienced it by attending his postgraduate classes reduced me to an inspired apprentice! Mrs Anne Makena of the Africa-Oxford Initiative office as well as the administrators of the AfOx office also provided platforms for me to interact with a host of Oxford scholars including Professor Indrajit Roy, Dr Phyllis Ferguson and Dr Jason Mosley.

Members of the faculty at the African Studies Centre directly and passionately expressed interest in my study and deliberately created time to understand my research focus. What amazed me was the extent to which Professor Miles Larmer and Professor David Pratten read my papers in detail in spite of highly demanding research and administrative schedules. Drs Tim Livsey and Olly Owen were also very helpful in providing alternatively attractive lines of thought. The Senior Archivist of the Bodleian libraries Lucy McCain also provided very useful opportunities for me to make good use of the resources at the Weston Library.

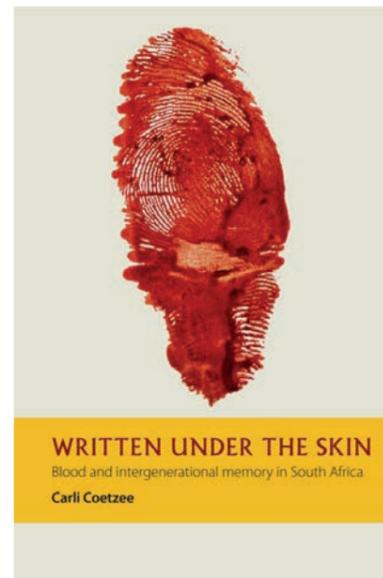
The indefatigable Marta, administrator of the Centre, was from the very start of my stay a life line. For a scholar like me who did not know his left from right in Oxford, Marta strategically managed my itinerary with ease, and was always available to put me through the remarkable arrangement of the Centre, in addition to the relationships between the Centre and other Oxford colleges and libraries.

Emphatically, and for the records, Oxford is filled with very warm scholars who mentor others with ease. The seminars, lunch, tea and coffee breaks, and dinners are times of refreshing discussions on knotty scholarly issues and research directions. The academic communality is remarkably an exception.

Research and Mentoring – Carli Coetzee

What has stood out during my period as academic visitor to the Oxford African Studies Centre has been the weekly seminar contact with the MSc candidates, and learning about their research projects and extra-curricular activities. My own academic year was taken up by the finalisation of two publications. The first is a monograph *Written Under the Skin: Blood and Intergenerational Memory in South Africa* (published by James Currey/ Boydell & Brewer and by Wits University Press), which uses the trope of blood under the skin (like a bruise, or before a blood test) to talk about the ethics of inter-generational transfers of knowledge. The second publication is a large multi-authored edited collection with essays on African literature written by 30 authors, located across a range of different geographical areas, and informed by diverse intellectual traditions. The Routledge Handbook of African Literature is the result of a two-year long editorial collaboration with Prof Moradewun Adejunmobi of UC Davis.

During the year I attended a CHCI-funded conference in Addis Ababa and another at the Centre for African Popular Culture (founded and headed by Prof Joseph Oduro-Frimpong) at Ashesi University outside Accra, and I am planning further writing and professionalisation workshops in cooperation with senior Africa-based colleagues at conferences in Nairobi, Lagos and Lilibela. As part of this work, I launched a project called the Africa Journal Work Academy (for more see <http://www.asauk.net/africa-journal-work-academy/>), in association with the ASAUK



and ASA of Africa, and with contributions from Dr Divine Fuh of CODESRIA and Prof Grace Musila (Wits University African literature department). The aim of the Africa Journal Work Academy is to build inter-generational links across African institutions and to train the next generation of editors, peer reviewers and authors. The work will mainly take place at Africa-based conferences and at institutes and universities across Africa. This initiative builds on the British Academy supported writing and mentoring workshops in which I have been involved over the last years, and which have resulted in workshops and mentoring opportunities in cooperation with colleagues at the important Africa-based conferences such as the Lagos Studies Association, the Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies conference series, and with the ASA of Africa.

Developing my Research on Angola – Rui Santos Verde

Being part the African Studies Centre is a fantastic experience as it brings theoretical and academic knowledge into close contact with the terrain and expertise in Africa. In Oxford, the best of both theoretical and practical worlds join together, obtaining a broth of culture and education that is enviable. Personally, being at the Centre allowed me to develop my research on Angola with a very stimulating depth and access to new sources. The contact with various forms of educational intervention inspired me to launch the Angola Research Network, which is now the biggest worldwide network that brings together researchers from various nationalities who are dedicated to Angola.

enabled me to embrace an extremely useful spectrum of knowledge. Of course, being in Oxford gives me access to a global platform of knowledge and discussion that is unbeatable.

The purpose of my stay in Oxford besides writing a book on the recent Angolan history, particularly its constitutional and legal evolution, is also to share the knowledge of Portuguese expression Africa. Having discovered here an open environment where that can be done without linguistic or other restrictions for that aim, has been very fulfilling.

I must also mention the seminars on Thursday, that I tried never to miss, which, due to their multiplicity and multidisciplinary vocation, have

What's in a label? Western donors' construction of success and failure in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau

Teresa Almeida Cravo

What role do representations of 'success' and 'failure' play in the peacebuilding and development arena? The encounter between North and South has, for centuries, been discursively shaped and permeated by abundant representations of the 'other'. Contemporary global interventionism can be analysed as yet another historically-specific moment of identity-creation and policy-making, in which discourses play a key role in stabilizing a hegemonic relationship, in this instance between donors and recipient countries. The recourse by the former to labels of success and failure to characterise the latter's peacebuilding and development trajectories can, therefore, be examined as a productive frame through which facts are interpreted, policies legitimised and hierarchies reinforced.

My research draws on the experiences of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau to explore the contingency of the production and reproduction of the success and failure labels, as well as their performative effects. It does not seek to determine whether these Lusophone African countries have indeed 'succeeded' or 'failed' in their attempts. Rather, it uses a poststructuralist lens to question precisely the supposed neutrality and objectiveness of these labels and as a way into an exploration of wider issues concerning the construction of meaning and the broader exercise of power within the international political order.

I was extremely fortunate to be able to pursue this research in the context of joining the Oxford African Studies Centre as an Academic Visitor for this academic year. A period of sabbatical from the University of Coimbra (Portugal), where I teach International Relations, allowed me to enter such a vibrant intellectual community and take full advantage of its outstanding resources. Besides participating in various Africa-related activities within the Centre, in particular, and the University, as a whole, during my first months, I presented my work in the context of the optional course on Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa for the Undergraduate Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, and the African Studies Centre Seminar Series. I also had the chance to return to Guinea-Bissau for a short research visit, where I reconnected with friends and built on previous avenues of inquiry. Alongside this research, I participated, as a member of the jury, in the Third Southern Africa Permanent People's Tribunal on Transnational Corporations, in Johannesburg, South Africa, where we heard testimony from a number of civil society organisations on the systematic violation of rights and dispossession of land of Southern African peoples.

The generosity and hospitality of the academic and administrative staff at the African Studies Centre have been remarkable. I am honoured and deeply grateful for the opportunity to enter such a vibrant community and engage in productive and enlightening discussions, not least in such a beautiful and inspiring setting as Oxford.



My time at the African Studies Centre and St Antony's College

Frank Aragbonfoh Abumere



One of my research endeavours is analysing political governance in Africa in terms of what it is and then proffering solutions as to how it can be improved. It is aimed at: finding realistic resolution to intractable policy and governance problems; dealing with governance 'problematique'; and proffering 'governance standards' that are theoretically plausible, practically possible and morally reasonable. In the past two years, I have been particularly working on politics of identity and power relations in Nigeria. This is my motivation for coming to the African Studies Centre and St Antony's College.

My time at the Centre and College has given me the opportunity to interact with academic experts and policy makers. On the one hand, interacting with academic experts has deepened my academic knowledge of the subject matter. On the other hand, interacting with policy makers has helped me to understand better why problems of politics of identity and power relations in Nigeria are intractable for them and how they usually attempt to deal with the problems. In combination, the two experiences have broadened my horizon of the subject matter both theoretically and practically.

Specifically, my time at the Centre enabled me: to attend excellent workshops and seminars; to benefit from fruitful academic interactions and engagements; to carry out my research at a world class Centre; and to be mentored by a world class Africanist, Prof. Wale Adebaniwi – whose support is priceless. By the end of my time at the Centre and College, I will have written some articles and made significant progress in a book I am working on.

The Africa Oxford Initiative

Avni Gupta

The Africa Oxford Initiative (AfOx) is a cross-university platform for 'all things Africa' in Oxford, with a vision to make engagement with Africa a strategic priority for the University of Oxford.

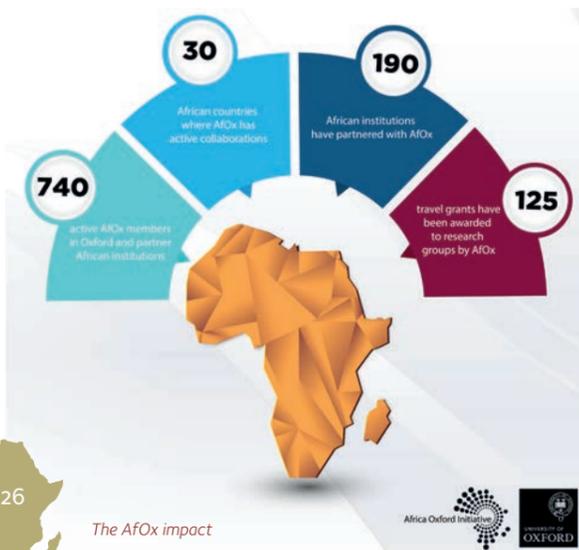
We engage with researchers and students to facilitate the development of equitable and sustainable collaborations between academics in African countries and researchers within the University of Oxford.

To achieve our aims, we facilitate new research collaborations between African researchers and academics from the University, via the AfOx Travel Grant. The travel grant enables two or more researchers to work on a collaborative project in either Oxford or an African institution. We also offer the AfOx Visiting Fellows Program to enhance academic mobility and network building for African researchers. The Fellowship allows an Africa-based researcher to visit Oxford for a period of 4-8 weeks to work on a collaborative project or use the University's facilities (such as the labs or libraries) for their research.

AfOx also works closely with the Oxford University Africa Society to provide targeted support to African graduate



Engaging with African DPhil students



The AfOx impact



Kenyan author and ASC alum Nanjala Nyabola interacting with participants after delivering an exciting AfOx insaka

students for their academic and social experience in Oxford. We conduct essay-writing workshops for African students who are new to the Oxford style of writing and DPhil roundtables to provide academic guidance to African DPhil students. We also provide advice to prospective African graduate students. Last year we hosted an online admissions live stream video, answering admissions-related questions from potential applicants.

AfOx is a growing community of researchers from the University of Oxford and African research institutions. Almost 300 academics from the University have signed up to the AfOx Researcher Database and expressed interest in getting involved in the AfOx platform to share ideas, knowledge and expertise with African colleagues. The AfOx network has developed partnerships with close to 200 African institutions, across 30 countries.

Throughout the year, AfOx hosts the AfOx insakas. These are a gathering for sharing ideas and knowledge about Africa-focused research with speakers from diverse and varied academic disciplines. There are two events each term, typically on Friday of Week 3 and Week 7. Each event features two talks by speakers from different disciplines, followed by questions and discussion.

This year, AfOx is also hosting the inaugural Focus on Research Africa (FORA), prior to the Oxford Africa Conference. The Day will feature energetic keynote addresses and thought-provoking presentations from academics in the fields of health, politics, economics, astronomy, archaeology, philosophy and history among others. It will bring together interdisciplinary researchers to discuss the importance of equitable research collaborations and good practices that make a research collaboration successful.

Keep up to date with all things Africa through our website here: <http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/>

New AfOx-ASC Annual Fellowship!

The ASC is excited to announce the new AfOx-ASC fellowship. This is a writing fellowship that provides opportunities for Africa-based scholars to spend time away from teaching and other obligations with the benefit of using the vast resources available in Oxford University for research, writing, mentoring and/or collaboration with an Oxford-based scholar. The first two recipients of the fellowship are Audrey Sitsofe Gadzekpo, Professor, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana and Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka, Associate Professor, the Catholic University, Bukavu, DRC.

The Oxford University Africa Society - A home for African/diaspora graduate students at Oxford

Simphiwe L Stewart (outgoing General Secretary, Oxford University Africa Society)

Every year, over 20,000 graduates from across the world will express an interest to pursue a Graduate Degree at the University of Oxford. Students from Africa account for 7 percent of this number. On average, just over 200 individuals will accept the offer of a place at Oxford and even fewer will finally complete their Degree. For various reasons, there are multiple hurdles for African graduate students to move through the steps between deciding to apply to Oxford and completing their Degree. Whether these are related to the perceived inaccessibility of the institution, visa and travel related issues, scholarships and funding, or the academic and social pressures related to studying at the world's leading academic institution, the road to and after an Oxford Degree is relatively more precarious for these applicants. The Africa Society was established in 1958 and aims to position itself as a touch point for African/Diaspora graduate students along this journey. The Society is the largest, officially recognized student club at the University of Oxford, concerning itself explicitly with issues related to Africa and the Diaspora. This year, in partnership with the African Studies Centre (ASC) and the Oxford Africa Initiative (AfOx), the 61st Executive Committee of AfriSoc have taken great strides towards achieving this mission.

We successfully launched and implemented an admissions programme offering application assistance, mentoring and an application fee waiver for prospective students from Africa and the Diaspora. We launched a Graduate Research and Innovation Network (GRAIN) and Town Hall series which offer a unique opportunity for African/Diaspora students to be at the forefront of sharing their research and framing the narrative on their work. Members used these forums to convene panels or meaningful discussions related to Africa, with guests from across the globe, and leveraged opportunities for work or academic collaboration.

AfriSoc also collaborated with other student clubs, for example the Kofu Collective, to launch Oxford's first Afro-Feminist Book Club – a group committed to critically examining interdisciplinary media related to identity, community, love, family and sexuality through the Afro-Feminist lens. Finally, we took on the issue of mental health and social cohesion for women, LGBTQI+ and under-represented members of our society. We engaged the office of the Vice Chancellor on tackling mental health, for example, through appointing culturally representative mental health professionals. We also developed a welfare protocol which was implemented at parties coordinated by the Society.

In the midst of this, we celebrated the remarkable achievements of AfriSoc members current and past, for example, through the Daley Breakfast series which honors the role, place and ambitions of black women in the academy.

However, home should not be purely political. As such, we took it upon ourselves to strengthen the bonds of community – commiserating through crises in Sudan, Zimbabwe and Kenya; celebrating birthdays, weddings and graduations as well as hosting each other in our homes – for tea, friendly conversation and the odd re-run of Game of Thrones.

It has been a remarkable year for graduate students from Africa/the Diaspora, at Oxford. What has been clear are the many hurdles which we are faced with and yet uniquely positioned to address.

To learn more about AfriSoc and ways in which you can engage with the Society, please visit: www.oxforduniversityafricasociety.com



AfriSoc Executive Committee (front) and Africa Conference Committee 2018-2019



Town Hall by Coralie Lolliot (MSc African Studies) titled 'FrançAfrique - Resistance or Collaborative Fraternity'



AfriSoc workshop on natural haircare with Natural Haircare Advocate, Amber Starks



A womxn's place in academia and higher education: The Daley breakfast series

Simpihiwe L Stewart

The first Daley Breakfast, 'A womxn's place in academia and higher education', was held on November 24th 2018 at the Parsonage Grill, Oxford. The event brought together women from across the University including Professor Daley, who was the guest of honor and keynote speaker. The Daley Breakfasts were established earlier this term, in honor of AfriSoc's first womxn patron and the first African-Caribbean scholar to hold a permanent professorship at the University of Oxford: Professor Patricia Daley. It is a series of three breakfasts held once a term at locations across Oxford, which are traditionally inaccessible for staff and students alike, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented groups at the University: graduate students from Africa and the Diaspora, and participants from developing and emerging economies. The Breakfasts are one of very few spaces at Oxford which are specifically dedicated to celebrating the achievements of womxn, creating space for under represented students and fostering inter-generational sharing on issues impacting these groups. Ultimately, they are an acknowledgment of the resilience, ambition and activism of womxn, particularly those from Africa and the Diaspora, at Oxford. The first breakfast included Staff from various Oxford Departments, the Africa Oxford Initiative and graduate students at the University.

When she joined the University in 1991, Professor Daley was the first black womxn to be appointed a lecturer at Oxford. She has worked diligently over the past 27 years to carve important and collaborative spaces across the University for anti-racist, feminist and peace studies. Against this backdrop, Professor Daley spoke candidly about how she has navigated her life as a womxn and an activist. Leaving home at the age of seventeen, Prof says she 'never looked back'. In fact, she said, 'it forced me to embark on a process of self-making . . . and heightened my understanding of injustice and inequality'. Prof built community with friends across national and ethnic backgrounds in the

working class community of Hackney. It is here, she recalls, where she benefited from local government measures (through the London Education Authority) which ensured equality of opportunity, even for marginalized black women, through free schooling, free school meals and free tertiary education.

Throughout her address, Prof paid tribute to those who had struggled for the equality and humanity of black people including the anti slavery movement, civil rights movement, women's empowerment movement, trade unionists, anti-racist and social justice-minded individuals. It is through the work of these champions, she said, that her life chances were transformed.

"I acknowledge my debt to them continually by ensuring that their spirits are kept alive in spaces where inequalities persist", she said. Indeed, in an academic field that is not the top choice for many graduates and compounded by not having many (if any) black role models in Geography, Prof Daley has often been the voice for addressing inequality whether through her advocacy for widening access to maternity leave, supporting the development of the first anti-harassment policy and producing the first diverse University prospectus at Oxford.

Although Prof spoke about the 'presumed incompetence' that black women face and the burden of prejudice and stereotyping in academia and elsewhere; she also expressed the vitality of "building new sisterhoods", across race and difference and employing the unique activism of black women, to stand up against systems of white, male dominated patriarchy. She impressed the importance of knowing your worth and what you are capable of, especially in spaces where women (certainly black women) are under represented and advised finding role models where they are – whether in family or literature.

Prof's honest and frank remarks about overcoming, often against seemingly insurmountable odds, resonated with all attendees. Ultimately, it was her unshakeable sense of self which left everyone in the room feeling reinvigorated and doubly inspired. "Undoubtedly, I am extraordinary. . . and as Maya Angelou says, a phenomenal woman", she said. Prof's keynote set the mood for the rest of the breakfast where Associate Professors, students and other Oxford staff were able to talk openly about shared experiences in charting their way towards Oxford, space-making across various intersections of race, class, gender and marital status as well as the possibilities in store for life after a season at the world's number 1 University. Two more Daley Breakfasts will be held at Oxford this academic year, concluding with the launch of a women's empowerment memo, which will be developed from feedback generated through the Breakfast series.

To learn more about the Daley Breakfast, please email: Secretary@oxforduniversityafricasociety.com



Prof Daley, Honorary Patron, Oxford University Africa Society
2018-2019

Nigeria in transition workshop

Oliver Owen

One of the recurrent frustrations of studying Nigeria is the persistence of a few very powerful frameworks, most often about the assumed challenges of diversity and political economy, which seem to recur without modification even as the country itself keeps dynamically unfolding and re-constituting. So we were pleased to take the opportunity of Nigeria's 2019 elections for a longer, broader and more thoughtful take on 'Nigeria in Transition' – in the social, cultural, political and economic senses of the word.

The day was a showcase for the African Studies Centre's contribution to the Oxford Martin School's research programme 'Governing the African Transition' which looks at these transitions on a continent-wide basis under the co-lead of Ricardo Soares de Oliveira and Stefan Dercon. The ASC's contribution is led by three staff members with a strong Nigeria focus: Professor Wale Adebawo, Dr David Pratten, and I; and the day we held was designed to open up our theme of 'transition' to multiple participants who have their own ways of defining those issues.

We were lucky to attract many high-quality submissions from both established and early-career scholars, researchers inside and outside academia, and from Nigeria as well as UK-based researchers. We were also fortunate to be able to involve some high-profile public policy figures who participated in the discussions, including former Minister Dr Aliyu Modibbo Umar, leading publisher and journalist Dele Momodu, and Mallam Bashir Yusuf Ibrahim, of the People's Democratic Movement (PDM), a Nigerian political party.

The first panel, chaired by Patricia Daley, looked at Nigeria's revenue and how it is redistributed. Belinda Archibong of Barnard College, Colombia, traced an economic history of how the tacit bargaining power of civil unrest under military rule affected patterns of resource distribution outside of the constitutional provisions. Neil McCulloch shared a survey of public attitudes which showcased Nigerians' thoughts on the legitimacy of taxes, and on the legitimacy of avoiding them. My own work traced Nigeria's move

away from oil-reliance to a post-2015 shift to non-oil revenue dominance. Second was a panel devoted to exactly that issue, the changing role of oil in Nigeria, chaired by Ricardo Soares de Oliveira. Temitope Akinremi's presentation looked at the sustainability of oil industry supply chains, while Dr Abimbola Agboluaje looked forward instead, predicting how the inbuilt weaknesses and contradictions in the institutions governing the oil sector might be likely to be reproduced in the next dispensation.

The third panel, chaired by David Pratten, covered the territory from public culture to politics, embracing culture in both the sense of communicating meaning, and as a productive resource in its own right. Paula Callus and Charles Gore introduced the ongoing project 'Artop: The Visual Articulations of Politics in Nigeria' which brings out the importance of new media interventions such as animation in political campaigning, and in critical activism. Alex Bud's work 'From Razzmatazz to Glamour' detailed the emergence of a new Nigerian style in interior décor as a window on the economic importance of new style industries. Chimdimma Onah and a team of very impressive postgraduates from Manchester University presented analysis on the impact of twitter in Nigerian politics as seen in the elections of just a few days before, examining how the public, paid hacks and bot software all interact to pattern political communication.

Our fourth panel on consolidation and conflict was chaired by visiting scholar Frank Abumere. Aliyu Modibbo Umar depicted the gradual mixing of

administration and party politics in his picture of the transformation of the office of Head of State in Nigeria to a political campaign hub; Patrick Ojo considered elections as necessary but insufficient criteria in political transitions; and Bulama Bukarti & Rachel Bryson documented Nigeria's approach to deradicalisation in the wake of the Boko Haram crisis and its socially destabilising aftermath.

The day concluded with a move to the Blavatnik School of Government for a keynote from Nigeria's leading constitutional lawyer, Chief Wole Olanipekun. His presentation on Electoral Law, Election Petitions and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria was timely, as it coincided with the announcement of court challenges to the results of the 2019 elections. Chief Olanipekun's presentation combined analytical thoughts on the evolution of this trend with the specifics of the legal cases which had informed it, but also a very personal and heartfelt plea for a transition away from this trend which he felt risks de-legitimising political processes. Kathryn Nwajaku, Dele Momodu and Mallam Ibrahim discussed the implications in a panel chaired by Wale Adebawo.

The day was planned as the first leg of a two-leg process, where the second will be a larger workshop in Nigeria later in 2019, as part of our commitment to do more of our work about Africa in Africa, as a way of making the process of intellectual formation more mutual, more embedded, and most importantly, more accessible to scholars based in African institutions. We thank the Oxford Martin School for their continued support and commitment.



Panellists at the Nigeria in Transition Workshop



Remembering Anthony Kirk-Greene

Muhammad Sanusi II, CON, Emir of Kano

Anthony Kirk-Greene's is a household name in Nigerian academic and, until recently, civil service circles. A former long-time colonial administrative officer who served as a lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University, his contributions to Hausa Studies, Nigerian – particularly Northern Nigerian – history, Nigerian politics and the study of the civil war are unrivaled. I have no doubt that many who are more competent than me will provide an overview of his prodigious intellectual oeuvre including the significant academic output of students under his supervision. His work on the Emirate and Native Authority system in Northern Nigeria remains valuable to this day. Students of History will remain indebted to him for his painstaking devotion to *The Travels of Barth*, who visited Kano in the days of Emir Usman I.

My academic background is in Economics and Islamic Law. My contact with Kirk-Greene's writing therefore came later in life than my classmates who studied history, Africa Studies, Hausa Studies or Political

Science. My earliest recollection would be the late 1990s when I developed an interest in Philosophy and, specifically, Ethics. Going through a book that was a collection of pieces on African Philosophy which covered a wide range including for example Father Placide Tempels and Bantu Philosophy, I read Kirk-Greene's article, *Mutumin Kirki: The Concept of the good man in Hausa*. It was a short piece but for me it was profound. This was a time in Nigeria when religion had become politicized. Northern politicians were all announcing the "Implementation of Shari'ah". The country had become polarized and the politics of ethnic and religious difference was gaining ascendancy. Some of us were concerned about the implications of the new demagoguery for the unity of the country and stability and development of the North. Starting around 1999 and for several years thereafter I found myself involved in a furious and engaging debate with politicians, Muslim scholars and religious intellectuals on the meaning of being a Muslim in a multi-cultural and multi-religious setting and in this century. What in fact does

it mean to be a "good" Muslim and how is that different from simply being a good person? The article by Kirk-Greene and some similar writings (such as various works of the Ghanaian philosopher Anthony – yes, Anthony! – Kwame Appiah) were pivotal to framing my world-view and sharpening my arguments. Sadly, we are seeing the consequence of intransigence and extremism today with the north of Nigeria falling far behind the south in all development indices. The discourse of religion eclipsed the discourse of development and politicians have privileged religious propaganda over delivering on education, nutrition, health and the rights of women. Today, as Emir of Kano, his many works of history and politics are going to be essential reading for my intellectual development, as we continue the struggle for hearts and minds and retrace our steps and focus on the issues that really matter.





Emir of Kano



Library in Kano

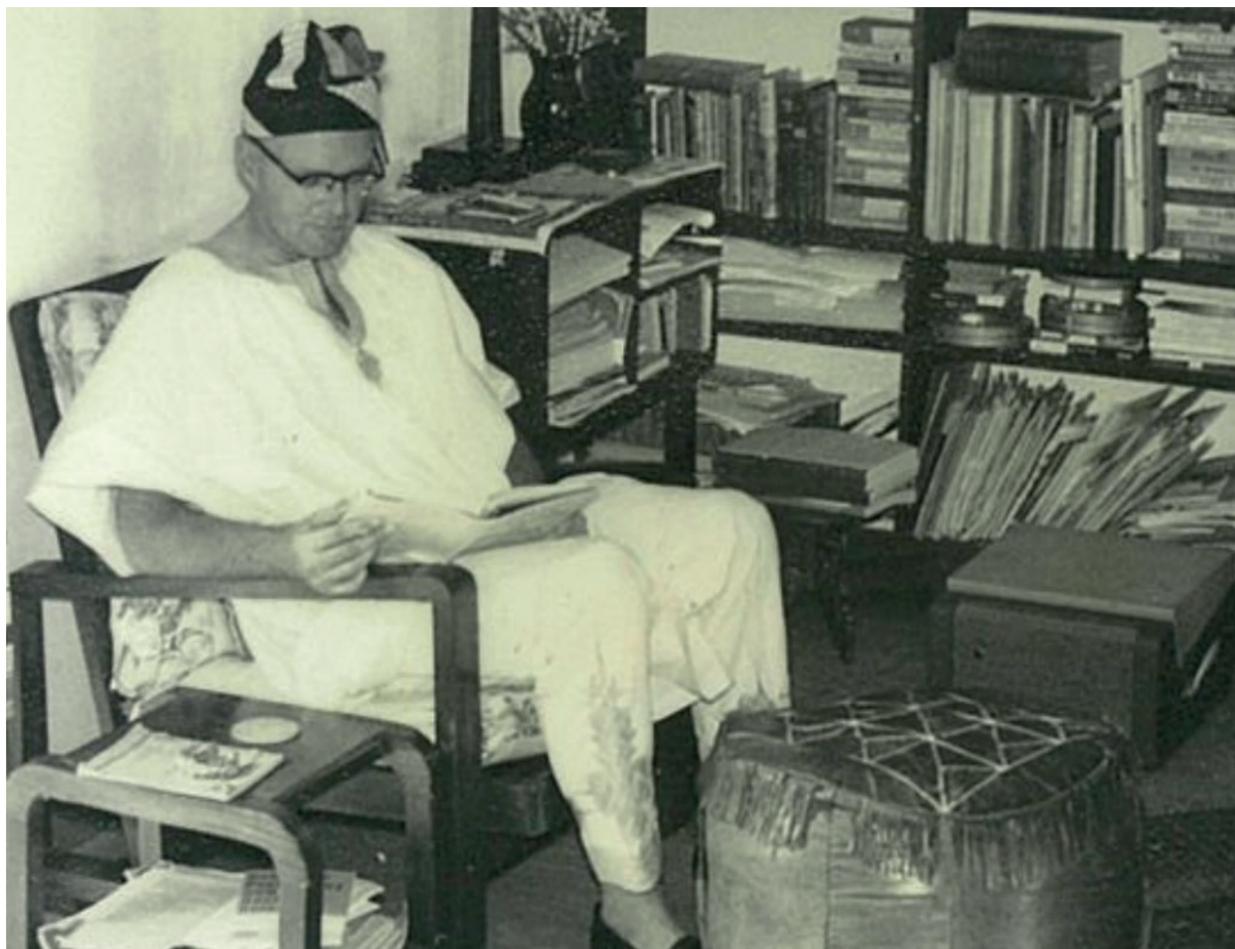
Not long after my ascension to the throne I bounced this idea off Professor Murray Last. To my surprise he became very excited and encouraged me to start immediately. He could see exactly what I was thinking and agreed that this would be a key defining moment in palace history and a legacy worthy of leaving behind. I then requested him to look out for any collections on sale that I could buy for the Palace Library. Murray mentioned that he was aware that the collection of books left behind by John Hunwick of Northwestern was available. Sadly, by the time we reached out to his family we were informed that the collection had gone. But we were soon alerted about two collections that were likely to be available – that of David Kimble and that of Kirk-Greene. I could think of no better collections in an Africa Studies Library. Kimble had a large collection covering all of Africa and mainly the post-colonial period, including a huge stock of journals. This would be very well complemented by Kirk-Greene's collection that covered largely the pre-colonial, colonial and independence period with a strong bias to the Sahel and the British and French colonies. Old books like the manuscripts of Mungo Park and the entire collection of Barth would be difficult to find elsewhere. Although the library has not been built, we set out these collections in addition to my own books in the form of libraries in several rooms in the palace. I am proud to say, thanks to Kirk-Greene that it would be difficult now to find a single private collection on Africa Studies that can match what we already have in the Kano Palace.

The reason I am qualified to write this tribute, however, is not any pretentious claim of expertise as a Kirk-Greene scholar. It is a simple one. I own all of Kirk-Greene's library. Here is the story.

The palaces in the North historically kept libraries and archives where manuscripts – some going back centuries – were kept (think Timbuktu). That tradition of palaces being repositories of knowledge – or let us say of culture in its broadest and richest sense – has disappeared for the most part, with culture being limited to trumpets and drumming and horses and customs and traditions. In Kano in the early sixties, my late grandfather, Emir Muhammadu Sanusi I, took a decision that would have momentous consequences. Concerned that thousands of manuscripts were lying fallow in the inner recesses of the palace and scholars had no access to them, he had them brought out and given to what was then called the Judicial School in Shahuci so that the wealth of knowledge therein would be available to students. These books were catalogued by Murray Last (and I believe he mentioned to me that he did this under the supervision of Kirk-Greene or John Hunwick, I cannot recall exactly now). In any case this wonderful idea had a tragic end. Those manuscripts were not well preserved and at some point were said to have been burnt in a fire in the school. Hundreds of years of knowledge gone up in smoke.

One of my dreams has always been to return the palace to being a centre of learning. By the time I became Emir in 2014 I owned a reasonable number of books mainly in economics, development, Islamic studies and philosophy. I had a dream of building a library in the palace which people could use for reading and research thus combining the legacy principle of palaces as repositories of knowledge with Emir Sanusi I's vision of access to this pool of knowledge. My thinking was to start something and hope that subsequent emirs would keep adding to the collection until at some point in the future the Kano Palace becomes like Timbuktu; scholars would troop there to have access to these books. But I wanted the library to focus largely on Africa and Islam.

The books are being catalogued. The plan is to leave them as the Emir's Palace library, under the management of the Bayero University, Kano. When this process is complete



the books will be available as part of BUK Library assets in the Emir's Palace which will be a research only library. The university will have librarians in the palace in charge of the books and in the future we hope to have reading rooms, an auditorium for academic conferences (Bi-annual Emir of Kano International Conference on Africa and Islam which we hope to hold around the durbars of Eid el Fitr and Eid el Kabir).

Anthony Kirk-Greene spent his life in the service of our lands. I can think of no better place for his collection to rest. Centuries from now, when hopefully this library will have millions of volumes, the Kirk-Greene collection will remain at its core. Already these books have become a tourist attraction. The collection is now the most unique and iconic element of the palace and pictures of the library have been all over the social media.

On this day I say thank you to Professor Kirk-Greene and, wherever you are, I hope you are seeing your collection in the palace built by Muhammadu Rumfa in the fourteenth Century. And I hope you are smiling with joy.

The Oxford University China Africa Network

The Oxford China-Africa Network (OUCAN) has had another strong year. Barnaby Dye has led OUCAN's organising this year, with a dedicated committee featuring Nicholas Lippolis, Yuan Chen, Jihane Berener, Hao Wu, Brian Oosthuizen Jiaying Tu, Nwamaka Ogbonna and Yuzhou (Jodie) Sun, with Dr Harry Verhoeven and Professor Ricardo Soares de Oliveira providing strategic direction.

Since its founding in 2008, OUCAN has sought to increase the empirical evidence and nuanced analysis of the significant phenomenon of China's engagement with Africa. The rapid deepening and broadening of ties between the African continent and China is one of the most important geopolitical trends of the 21st century for Africa, and China's economic miracle cannot be understood without analysing its multifarious partnerships with African countries. Moreover, Africa's potential for economic transformation cannot be understood without considering its relationship with China.

OUCAN has continued to further this agenda this year by organising a series of seminars and its annual conference, held on May 21. Seminars in Hilary and Trinity terms examined a wide range of subjects, including infrastructure building and economic development with Dr Igor Rogelja (King's College, London) and Weiwei Chen (School of Oriental and African Studies, London). A book launch followed in May on Chinese international Hydropower construction with Frauke Urban and Giuseppina Siciliano.

The timely theme of this year's annual conference, OUCAN's main event, was the impact and opportunity of China's Belt and Road initiative for Africa, its developmental and political potential. Specifically, this involved consideration of three areas: Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Infrastructure and Industrialisation:

The conference welcomed a range of speakers from policy and academia to provide interesting insights on this theme.

South Africa Discussion Group, 2019

William Beinart

The South Africa discussion group has run over many years in different forms: as a forum for post-graduate students to present their research, as a visiting speaker seminar, and as a vehicle for staff and students to discuss key developments in the country and the region. The group gives those interested an opportunity for both formal and informal debate. As Jonny Steinberg and William Beinart were both away in Michaelmas 2018, we did not run the seminar but William Beinart, with the support of Colin Bundy and Thomas Cousins, convened again in Hilary 2019. We were fortunate to have visits from Khumisho Moguerane from the University of Johannesburg and David Everatt, Director of the University of the Witwatersrand School of Governance (who came as an Oppenheimer fellow).

Khumisho talked on detailed historical work that expands on her Oxford doctorate. She focussed on African landholders in the Tswana-speaking areas of the country and the gradual changes in chieftaincy and landholding. She analysed the process as one shaped from below as well as above by the state. Her paper stimulated a valuable discussion on the entrenchment of traditional authorities in the former homelands of South Africa and the reassertion of chieftaincy under the African National Congress.

David Everatt gave two papers – the first outlining a project on South African cities in comparative perspective and the second analysing polling data on elections. The discussion about cities also developed around the tensions in planning between corporate, elite and administrative priorities imposed from above, and resistance and unruliness from below. The polling data showed a degree of stability in party loyalties in South Africa despite the tumult of Zuma's second term. More people were uncertain about their vote, or reluctant to vote, but the results showed the likelihood of the ANC vote holding up in Gauteng and nationally. The DA does not seem to have made significant inroads, and if anything was losing votes; the EFF seemed to be making only small gains. In addition, Liz Fouksman, a post-doc at the African Studies Centre, talked on her research around ideas about a universal basic grant. She found that even those without work, or stable jobs, in South Africa, were uncertain about this idea as a focus for political demands because of their strong association of formal employment and wages. Fuaad Coovadia gave a fascinating talk, based on his masters dissertation, about the impact of gender on job-seeking.

A full programme has been mounted for Trinity term 2019, with visiting speakers and also a student-led discussion on the election results.

ASC Annual Lecture

The ASC Annual Lecture will take place on Friday 7 June at 5pm at St Antony's College

"Edouard Glissant and the Right to Opacity: some Trembling Thoughts on the State of Critical Theory in Francophone Africa",
by Professor Manthia Diawara (New York University)

In the context of the age of transparency, Professor Diawara addresses what Édouard Glissant meant by "opacity" and the need to consent to everyone's right to it. It is for Glissant the precondition for every encounter and relationship to the other. Diawara uses this Glissantian concept of opacity to critique the so-called "Colonial Library", as theorized by V.Y. Mudimbe and his followers in Francophone Africa, such as Felwin Saar and Achille Mbembe of the *Atelier de la pensée*.



The South African elections and the tale of two polls

Abigail Branford (MSc African Studies 2018; DPhil Candidate in Department of Education)

In the lead up to South Africa's national elections Professor David Everatt, Head of the Witwatersrand School of Governance, presented his research on voter preferences at Oxford's South Africa Discussion Group. Shortly after this presentation, Everatt clashed polling swords with the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) in the South African press. He had been commissioned by the governing African National Congress to carry out a poll in December 2018 which put the largest opposition party – the Democratic Alliance – at only 14% in the battleground province of Gauteng. The IRR poll conducted in February 2019 has the DA at more than double that in Gauteng with 32.4%. Everatt criticised IRR's methodology in *Business Day* while IRR Head of Politics, Gareth van Onselen fired back in an opinion piece. Longtime followers of the politics of commenting on South African politics would note Everatt's association with the ANC and Onselen's association with the DA as a possible reason for their level of investment in the matter of the disputed polls.

However, this disparity in the polling numbers may have less to do with the manner of calculation and more to do with the timing of these polls. As *The Africa Report* points out, Everatt's poll reflects the mood before two major events that soured relations between the public and the ANC, potentially causing a swing towards the DA captured by the later IRR poll. The first was the intensification of rolling blackouts (known locally as 'load shedding') as a result of the dysfunction of state-owned energy enterprise Eskom. The second was the release of the ANC's electoral list which included a number of controversial individuals widely believed to be more interested in personal empowerment than public service. Both are painful reminders of the mismanagement of state institutions and corruption under the presidency of Jacob Zuma. *The Africa Report's* suggestion that relatively large numbers of voters changed their preference between sampling opens up an intriguing possibility that – contrary to popular belief – voting behaviour in our national elections may not be so partisan after all.

While in Cape Town in April, I found that floating voters were happy to discuss how they approached these elections. Some feared that a bad showing by the ANC incumbent President Cyril Ramaphosa would enable the remaining Zuma faction to oust him along with his promises to root out corruption. Therefore, these floating voters had decided to vote ANC and temporarily guard Ramaphosa. Others were too unsure of Ramaphosa's

ability to stay in control of the ANC, let alone to clean house. Some argued that the ANC should not be rewarded after years of high-level corruption followed by such a disappointing electoral list. They decided voting for the DA as the second largest party offered the best punishment and surety of needling of the ANC. Still others couldn't stomach the neoliberal policies of the DA and opted instead for smaller parties such as the United Democratic Movement. Significantly, the EFF had all but disappeared from such strategic conversations, possibly as a result of incidents such as EFF leader Julius Malema doxing prominent journalist Karima Brown leading to repeated threats of rape and murder against her, rendering the EFF *party-non-grata* for some.

This dispute about the DA polling numbers and these conversations with floating voters reveals an important paradox to those perhaps unfamiliar with South African politics. While it is common knowledge that the ANC will remain the largest party in South Africa after this election, that does not mean South Africans are indifferent towards the opposition. The strength of the opposition and the strength of which opposition holds a real significance for the electorate. By the time of this piece's publication, we will already know the final outcome as well as which poll more closely captured voters' appetite for opposition parties on the 8th of May.



Oxford University experience

Asa Mudzimu (MSc African Studies 2018; DPhil Candidate in Department of International Development)



Carrying out an interview in Gokwe, Zimbabwe (2018)

I still have vivid memories of the days I got admitted to read for MSc African Studies with the University of Oxford. It started with the university and college offers, and later on and most importantly, my Patrick Duncan Scholarship for Sustainable Development. I almost failed to believe it. Of course, I grew up hearing idioms like 'dreams come true' but to me this was far beyond a dream. Let me start by giving my brief background to clarify why I feel like this was breaking a hard shell.

My journey to Oxford is incomplete without mentioning my rural and childhood upbringing in Gokwe, one of the most remote corners of northwestern Zimbabwe. Growing up in a very humble family, we walked several miles each day to and from our rural school. I will never regret having that background as it made me to be so determined, dedicated, and hardworking. Having an opportunity to come to Oxford was a tweak in my life. At the same time, it was an uneasy thing – characterized with mixed feelings of excitement, homesickness, and culture shock. With the support from

my supervisors, course and college administrators, I saw myself floating up out of the mist. As I am writing this, I have switched departments and started a DPhil programme in International Development. It follows that my experiences with Oxford system is biased towards this background.

When I am asked to make a reflection of my experiences with Oxford, I always fail to find comprehensive words. Oxford is an amazing place to pursue your academic career dreams. Perhaps, the best part of it is the opportunity to meet and interact with people from different parts of the world specializing in different academic disciplines. The environment is conducive not only to learning but also to developing one's social intelligence – from religion to economics and politics. Through this experience, you can build knowledge, networks and, perhaps, lifetime bonds with fellow students with whom you pursue your degree. The academic life is amazing. The University provides vast resources for student development. Libraries – from the departmental and college libraries to the Bodleian libraries – are awesomely rich. Having been familiar with a Zimbabwean university system, I found the Oxford collegiate system strange and exciting. Certainly, it is a way of decentralizing the University, but I see it as a means of creating more space for student interactions – within and among colleges through dinner, sports and other recreational facilities.

I found my course challenging and at the same time interesting. Since the programme is on the crossroads of different disciplines, there is diversity among colleagues – with different backgrounds in terms of research interests, political and religious views. The classes became a melting pot with a lot more real-life and practical thinking based on diverse experiences. And sometimes the imposter syndrome is not an uncommon thing. Unsurprisingly, this makes Oxford great!

Hendrik Oye

After graduating from the MSc (2018), Hendrik started an internship at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva, and has since become a full-time consultant within the Strategy Investment and Impact division. After once contracting malaria himself when he was working in West Africa, he is now grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the West and Central Africa teams in contributing towards the Global Fund's mission in ending the three diseases. Alongside his policy work, he has pursued academic endeavours and presented his research on aid negotiations and Africa-China relations at the annual Sustainability and Development Conference at the University of Michigan.

In his free time, he has started bouldering and is fully enjoying the Swiss outdoors with hiking trips on weekends.

Hendrik Oye exploring the Swiss alps.



Finally a 'New Sudan'? Echoes of Garang in the #SudanProtests

Danielle Del Vicario (MSc African Studies 2018; DPhil Candidate in Department of History)

'But what about John Garang? We haven't spoken about John Garang.'

Conducting interviews last year for my MSc dissertation on the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association—the humanitarian wing of the rebel SPLA which fought a twenty-two-year war against the Sudanese Government, laying the groundwork for South Sudanese secession in 2011—I was asked this question time and time again by my interlocutors. John Garang was the SPLA's 'larger-than-life' leader (to quote from Obama) and died in a mysterious helicopter crash in 2005, six months after signing a Comprehensive Peace Agreement to end Sudan's civil war. Despite his having very little to do with my research, I inevitably acquiesced to my interlocutors and spent part of every interview discussing Garang's politics, vision and, of course, his possible murderers.

One year later, I've officially surrendered to the current of popular political interest and am six months into an Oxford DPhil—on the life, legacy and narrative currency of John Garang.

Since his death, Garang and his political idea of an inclusive, non-secessionist 'New Sudan,' have been re-interpreted in memoirs, political treatises, Tweets, poems and conference papers authored by South Sudanese at home and in the diaspora. At once founding father, autocratic Dinka tyrant (the predominant ethnic group in South Sudan) and murdered martyr, he offers a focal point for debate about South Sudan's fractured and repressed politics. However, the South Sudanese are not the only ones to invoke Garang's 'New Sudan' in articulating political grievances and aspirations; his memory has also been used by northern Sudanese in the protests which began last December, culminating in early April with a 24/7 sit-in in front of army headquarters in Khartoum attended by up to three million Sudanese, ultimately prompting senior army officials to arrange President Bashir's removal from power, thus precipitating a series of debates between civilian opposition groups and the military over the composition of a transitional government (which, at the time I write this, are still ongoing).

In early February, six weeks after the start of the protests but well before images of young Sudanese women standing atop cars demanding change captured the attention of western media, Oxford's Northeast Africa Forum hosted

Yasir Arman of the Sudanese opposition party SPLM-North and Rosalind Marsden, former British and EU Ambassador to Sudan to give an update on the protests. Emphasizing the significance of how many opposition groups had aligned to call for regime change, Yasir made repeated reference to Garang and his 'New Sudan': here at last was a chance for all of Sudan (with the obvious lacuna of the now independent South, where the idea of the 'New Sudan' was first articulated) to unite in an inclusive and democratic state, including the long marginalized rebel movements of Darfur, Beja and the Nuba Mountains.

Within the iconography of the April sit-in, Garang and the 'New Sudan' have continued to figure: Garang's portrait has been held aloft by protesters; the opening music of Radio SPLA, the SPLA's wartime station of the 1980s, played on Sudan TV as the world eagerly awaited the Army's 'special announcement' on the day of Bashir's overthrow; and Sudanese continue to speak of a nebulously defined 'New Sudan.' As the sit-in continues, the protesters could be—as one South Sudanese tweeted the week of Bashir's removal—'the true heirs of Dr John Garang.'



Perspectives and positionality in the Mountain Kingdom

Carter Goodwin

"You must talk to my colleague..."
"I have just the person to help you..."
"I will introduce you to..."

During my fieldwork in Lesotho, I found that my in-person interviews typically ended with these phrases. In academic parlance, these introductions and connections are termed Snowball Sampling, where interviewees help the researcher recruit more participants. Yet for me, these offers were far more than methodology, but rather illuminated the excitement of Basotho to discuss their country, it's problematic political history, and the very real promise of current reform efforts.

Initially, I was entirely unnerved by the prospect of depending on fieldwork and interviews to write a dissertation, the capstone to our African Studies MSc. What if no one wants to meet with me? What if people are too busy to participate in my research? How do I get into contact with people? Yet each additional interview and conversation eased my worries; every person I met actively aided my research by sharing their unique perspective and connecting me with others to broaden my participant pool. This research—focused on obstacles to the security sector reform process in Lesotho—is not the friendliest of topics, so I was struck by the frankness of the people I met as they illustrated the issue from their perspective. Each interview participant—human rights advocate, military official, investigative journalist, politician—brought a new layer to the conversation and challenged me to reevaluate my own assessment of the security sector and its engagement with civilian politics.

Underpinning these interactions was a constant focus on positionality. I often considered my status as an American, an outsider, asking questions about a politically charged and deeply personal topic. How does my background influence

my interactions? How can I hope to synthesize numerous Basotho perspectives—drawn from years of experience—within only a few weeks? Whether right or wrong, I determined there is no single answer to this, other than to continue meeting, thinking, and most importantly listening, to those around me.

Constant flexibility was necessary. Some days I'd meet my interview participants formally in a government office wearing a suit and tie, while other times I'd visit a local spot for espresso or tea to have more free-flowing conversations, casually drifting from politics in Maseru to goings-on in Washington, DC to Premier League Football. While the former holds weight in its formality, the latter introduced me to Basotho deeply committed to discussing and addressing political instability.

The litany of people willing to aid my research and provide me access to social networks forced me to assess my own role in the accessibility of knowledge and research. I'm left hoping to continue the conversation, and work to improve the accessibility of Oxford's research going forward. Whether this may be through my own small efforts, like sharing a completed dissertation widely, or thinking more long-term within academia, it's important for researchers to ensure that they too are helping make connections for others.



Lesotho's Parliamety building, taken during a visit while in Maseru



Hiking near Maseru.



Reflection on Fieldwork Experience: The Politics of Land in South Africa

Aurelien Pradier

As my research interests lie at the intersection of economics, politics, law and sociology, I decided that my research should focus on the land question in South Africa—both a current and contemporary issue that requires analysis drawing from a number of disciplines. In particular, I was interested in hearing the voices that often remain in the shadow of the mediated discourses of political leaders and lobbies: the voices of members involved with grassroots movements, but also those of large-scale landowners. Thus, my fieldwork experience began by trying to recruit participants into my study and interviewing them to hear their views. I contacted various organizations that I had identified prior to leaving Oxford and introduced myself to some of these to build a network of participants. While many grassroots activists were eager to speak to me, it proved extremely difficult to get into direct contact with landowners and even more difficult to get them to agree to an (anonymous) interview. Some landowners responded to my requests by declining my invitation for an interview but most emails remained unanswered and phone-calls were never returned. The experience proved to be slightly frustrating; however, the finding that landowners were reluctant to speak to me was telling in itself, slightly altering my intended approach to the topic. Going forward, I will use my experiences, observations and information gathered from participants to write my dissertation on the politics of land in South Africa.

The two pictures I have chosen to attach to this brief description of my fieldwork experience were taken only 15km apart from each other. I think they illustrate the extreme inequality that persists in South Africa well.



Langa, Cape Town. One of the townships of Cape Town. Population density: 17000/km²



Constantia, Cape Town. One of the wealthiest suburbs of Cape Town. Population density: 530/km²



Insider experience: Navigating cultural etiquettes and customs during my field research in Harare

Esther Chidowe

In March and April, I spent five weeks in Zimbabwe conducting research on women's experiences of menstruation. I spent the bulk of my time in Chitungwiza and Mbare, high-density townships located in Harare, where women's lack of access to sanitary products is clearly exposed. Though the products are available, they retail at \$3.50 RTGS which for most women is unaffordable. Some have never used sanitary pads, and most use old cloth and pads interchangeably during their cycle.

My first research experience in Harare was in Chitungwiza where I conducted a focus group. I had asked a contact I made at an NGO to help me facilitate a focus group, and to mobilise no more than 10 women. It was my first time conducting a group discussion and I was anxious about how I would manage group dynamics, but I reassured myself that nothing could go horribly wrong. I arrived at the location where the discussion was taking place only to find over 40 women squashed into a small room, and others in the hallway leaving a trail that extended out of the front door! Those that could not get a seat inside laid their zambias on the ground and sat outside for the duration of the conversation. I'm certain they could hardly hear what was being discussed, but that was when I became assured that the issue of menstruation mattered deeply to them and it was important for them to be there.

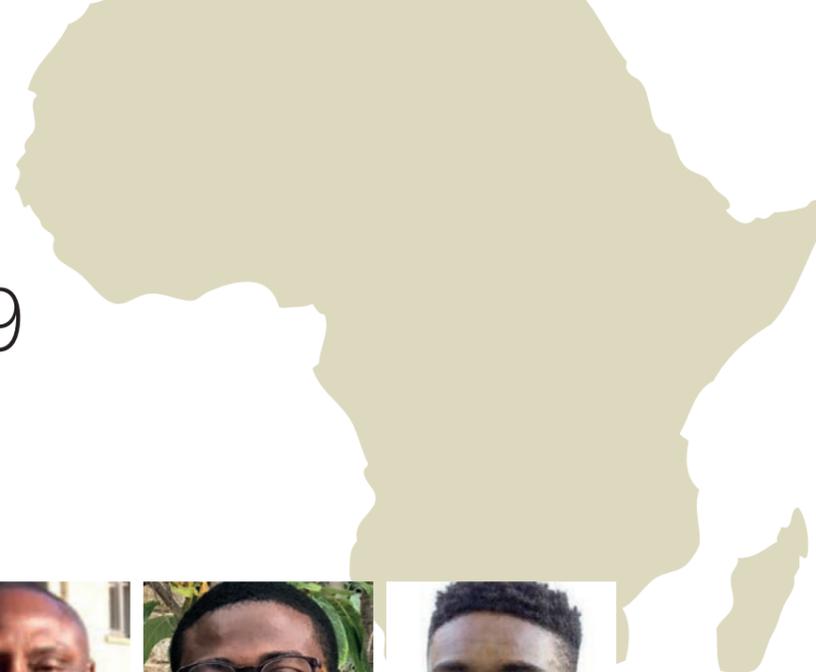
The focus group began with a prayer, a common Zimbabwean custom for opening and closing gatherings. On one occasion when I was conducting a focus group in Mbare, I forgot to close the discussion with a prayer. As I thanked all of my participants whilst preparing to leave, I

turned back to a voice saying, "Here in Zimbabwe when we come together we don't leave without praying. I don't know how you guys do things over there but this is how things are done here." It was this experience that reminded me that I was home. The customs and etiquettes all had to be a part of the research process. As an insider conducting research it was expected of me.



Focus group in Chitungwiza

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