



University
of Basel

Centre for
African Studies

Africa and the Academy in the 21st Century

Basel, 1–2 November 2019

An interactive, interdisciplinary conversation
to bring together anyone interested in the past,
present and future study of Africa and its impact
on academic disciplines.

Keynote: Decolonising the Academy
(Carl Schlettwein Lecture 2019)

Francis Nyamnjoh (University of Cape Town)

Paired Conversation 1: Anthropology

Rita Kesselring (University of Basel)

Mwenda Ntarangwi (Commission for
University Education, Nairobi)

Paired Conversation 2: Public Health

Jakob Zinsstag (University of Basel)

Mandisa Mbali (University of Cape Town)

Paired Conversation 3: History

Julia Tischler (University of Basel)

Ruramisai Charumbira (University of Bern)

Paired Conversation 4: Urban Studies

Dalila Ghodbane (Univ. della Svizzera italiana)

Berend van der Lans (Archi/Afrika foundation)

Info and registration
[www.zasb.unibas.ch/de/
africa-and-the-academy](http://www.zasb.unibas.ch/de/africa-and-the-academy)

Venue
University of Basel
Kollegienhaus, room 001
Petersplatz 1, 4051 Basel



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of Humanities and Social Sciences
www.sagw.ch



University
of Basel

Graduate Network
African Studies



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

Rationale

The conference invites the speakers and audience to reflect on a classical work in the field of African Studies, **Africa and the Disciplines** (V. Mudimbe, R. Bates and J. O'Barr 1993), but also consider the present and future of African Studies, in particular in Switzerland.

25 years ago, the conference "Africa and the Disciplines" and the landmark publication that resulted from it, asked for Africa's contribution to the disciplines. It showed the extent to which Africa as an apparently marginal field of study had already contributed to the emergence of new topics and ideas in the respective disciplines.

The momentum created by these insights within broader academia was, unjustifiably, short lived. Especially so given that the study of Africa has not only contributed to the development of the disciplines; as an interdisciplinary field, but has also changed the character of what once were separate disciplines and brought them closer together.

Scholars became increasingly interested in the spaces between the disciplines. This interest, which is usually cast in terms of interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity, has bred a wide range of new and interesting studies with stimulating findings. Africa has created new research fields that no longer fit into the existing disciplinary framework. This increasingly affects our view of what the social sciences and the humanities are about, the topics that they will need to address in the future and how these new fields shape our understanding of the academic landscape as a whole.

Structure

Over two days the conference will hold four interactive, interdisciplinary plenary sessions. Each session will begin with a 30-minute moderated "paired conversation" between two scholars of a particular discipline. The choice of two "classic" disciplines – Anthropology and History –, and two "modern" inherently interdisciplinary disciplines, Public Health and Urban Studies, – reflects change in the field of African Studies.

Each of the eight conversation partners was invited to reflect on a relevant chapter of the book *Africa and the Disciplines*, as well as their own experience in academia as an Africanist: How has the field developed since they started. What experiences have they had with non-Africanist colleague's in academia who question the value of the study of Africa? What types of armour (intellectual or otherwise) have they developed, as a result?

Immediately following the "paired conversation," to enhance the dynamic, interactive and interdisciplinary purpose of the conference, the audience will be randomly divided into three to four breakout sessions where participants and panel speakers will consolidate the introduced topics in a concentrated group discussion. At the end of each session the audience will reunite for a moderated discussion in the plenary.

Organising Committee

Cassandra Mark-Thiesen (University of Basel)

Carole Ammann (SNSF-Postdoc / University of Bern)

Fiona Siegenthaler (University of Basel)

Christelle Favre (University of Basel)

Solange Mbanefo (University of Basel)

Alice Aterianus (Université de Lausanne)

Matthieu Bolay (Graduate Institute Geneva)

Wilfred Elegba (Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute, Accra)

Friday 1 November 2019

- 9:30-10:00** Registration and coffee
- 10:00-10:10** **Welcome address**
Lorena Rizzo, (Co-president, Centre for African Studies Basel)
- 10:10-10:30** **Introduction – Africa and the Academy**
Till Förster (University of Basel)
- 10:30 – 12:45** **Paired Conversation 1: Anthropology**
Rita Kesselring (University of Basel)
Mwenda Ntarangwi (Commission for University Education, Nairobi)
Moderation: Alice Aterianus-Owanga (Université de Lausanne)
Workshops by Fiona Siegenthaler (University of Basel); Carole Ammann (University of Bern); Matthieu Bolay (Graduate Institute Geneva)
- 12:45-14:00** Lunch
- 14:00-16:15** **Paired Conversation 2: Public Health**
Jakob Zinsstag (Swiss Tropical and Public-Health Institute)
Mandisa Mbali (University of Cape Town)
Moderation: Henri-Michel Yéré (University of Basel)
Workshops: Tanja Hammel (University of Basel); Wilfred Elegba (Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute, Accra); Vera Eichenauer (ETH Zürich)
- 16:30 -17:30** **General Assembly of the Swiss Society for African Studies (SSAS)**
- 17:30-18:15** Break
- 18:15-19:15** **Keynote: Decolonising the Academy (Carl Schlettwein Lecture 2019)**
Francis Nyamnjoh (University of Cape Town)
- 19:15 -20:30** Apéro Riche - Reception

Saturday 2 November 2019

- 10:00-12:15** **Paired Conversation 3: History**
Julia Tischler (University of Basel)
Ruramisai Charumbira (University of Bern)
Moderation: Cassandra Mark-Thiesen (University of Basel)
Workshops: Danelle van Zyl-Hermann; Andrea Kiyasi (both University of Basel); Wilfred Elegba (Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute, Accra)
- 12:15-13:15** Lunch
- 13:30-15:45** **Paired Conversation 4: Urban Studies**
Dalila Ghodbane (Università della Svizzera Italiana)
Berend van der Lars (ArchiAfrika foundation)
Moderation: Solange Mbanefo (University of Basel)
Workshops: Fiona Siegenthaler (University of Basel); Carole Ammann (University of Bern); Matthieu Bolay (Graduate Institute Geneva)
- 15:45 -16:00** Break
- 16:00-17:00** **Wrap-up discussion**
Mwenda Ntarangwi, Mandisa Mbali,
Ruramisai Charumbira, Berend van der Lars
Moderation: Didier Péclard (Université de Genève)
- 17:00-17:15** **Vote of thanks and final word**
Anne Mayor (Université de Genève, Co-president, Swiss Society for African Studies)

Registration

Please register for the conference via the conference website before 19 October 2019.
www.zasb.unibas.ch/de/africa-and-the-academy

Fee Structure:

The fee covers coffee breaks, lunches and reception.

Regular: CHF 60.- (SSAS members: CHF 40.-)
Students: CHF 30.- (SSAS members: CHF 0.-)

Students, including PhD candidates, are encouraged to join the SSAS on the occasion, so as to benefit from the discount.

Venue:

The conference is being held at the main building of the University of Basel.
The plenaries are all held in room 001.

Kollegienhaus
Petersplatz 1
4051 Basel)

Directions:

From the main train station (Bahnhof Basel SBB), take bus #30 to "Universität" (about three stops). From there, follow the short street "Auf der Lyss" to its end, turn left onto "Leonhardsgraben" and then "Petersgraben", and follow this road for about 100 meters. The Kollegienhaus will be on your left.

From the German train station (Basel Badischer Bahnhof) also take bus #30 to "Spalentor" (15 minutes). From there, walk down "Spalengraben" to the venue.

From "Basel Euro Airport" take the shuttle (bus #50) to "Basel Bahnhof SBB" and then change to bus #30 (see above).

Tram #3 and bus #34 also service the conference venue with two additional "Universität" stops adjacent to the Kollegienhaus.

Contact:

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