



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

Swiss Researching Africa Days

Journées suisses d'études africaines

University of Bern / Université de Berne, 25-26.10.2024

Call for papers / Call for posters

The Swiss Society for African Studies invites paper propositions for the upcoming 8th Swiss Researching Africa Days. The objective of this biannual convention is to promote the exchange among the community of researchers working on Africa in Switzerland. Panels typically integrate young and established scholars (Master, PhDs, postdocs, professors). Please submit your proposal before **31 July 2024 directly to the convenors of the respective panel.**

One of our aims is to present on-going or recently finished PhD research on a topic related to Africa at Swiss universities. The organizers invite researchers to submit a scientific poster (size A0, vertical orientation) on their PhD research for the Swiss Researching Africa Days. There will be time slots for the presentation of the posters during the conference. The posters will also be compiled as an electronic reader to be published on the website of the Swiss Society for African Studies. Please submit proposals for posters (pdf) to Veit Arlt (veit.arlt@unibas.ch). The deadline for submission is **31 August 2024**.

Appel à contributions /Appel à proposition de posters

*La Société suisse d'études africaines invite à contribuer à la 8^e édition des Journées suisses d'études africaines. Ces journées biannuelles visent à promouvoir l'échange entre chercheurs de tous niveaux (master, doctorats, post-docs, professeurs). Nous vous prions de soumettre vos propositions jusqu'au **31 juillet 2024 directement aux organisatrices et organisateurs des panel.***

*En outre, la SSEA souhaite dresser un inventaire des thèses de doctorat en cours dans le champ des études africaines en Suisse. Pour cela, nous invitons toutes les doctorantes et tous les doctorants ayant une thèse en cours dans une université suisse, ou ayant soutenu une thèse récemment, à préparer un poster (A0, orientation portrait) et le présenter lors des journées. Un moment sera réservé pour que les participants puissent prendre connaissance des posters et discuter avec leurs auteurs. Tous les posters seront ensuite publiés sur notre site web dans une petite brochure. Les propositions de posters (PDF) sont à envoyer par e-mail jusqu'au **31 août 2024** à Veit Arlt (veit.arlt@unibas.ch).*

For the Board of the SSAS/SGAS/SSEA: Didier Péclard, Tobias Haller and Veit Arlt
For the University of Bern: Tobias Haller

Overview of panels / Liste de panels

SUSTAINABILITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Panel 1: Epistemologies, Plural Knowledges, and Narratives of Sustainability and Transformations

Panel 2: Impact is the precursor to Sustainability and Transformation

Panel 3: Towards sustainable language policies in Africa

Panel 4: Identifying Transformations in Africa through a Lusophone Lens: Interdisciplinary Contributions

PEACE, POLITICS, AND RELIGION

Panel 5: African Innovations for Sustainable Peace?

Panel 6: Is China's presence in Africa sustainable?

Panel 7: Religious institutionalization in Africa: organizational practices and individual experiences

Panel 8: Women of Faith: Women's Rights and Religious Associations in and beyond Africa

ECOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT, AND FOOD

Panel 9: Land Use and Land Cover across Africa – present, dynamics and futures

Panel 10: Food and Nutrition in Africa facing Transformations: Past, Present and Future

Panel 11: Agroecology in Sub-Saharan Africa: sovereign transformations or new recipe for development arenas?

HISTORY AND ECONOMY OF URBAN SPACES

Panel 12: Building the sustainable African city

Panel 13: Urban commons in Africa: sustainable city development beyond market and state?

Panel 14: Transforming West African Cities in the mid-20th Century

THEME 1: SUSTAINABILITY, KNOWLEDGE AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Panel 1: Epistemologies, Plural Knowledges, and Narratives of Sustainability and Transformations

CONVENORS:

LISE LANDRIN (UNIVERSITY OF BERN)

MOUHAMADOU EL HADY BA (UNIVERSITÉ CHEIK-ANTA DIOP DE DAKAR)

Production of knowledge and actions are built upon narratives. This panel seeks to critically examine how diverse knowledge systems, including local and academic knowledges, shape narratives about sustainability and transformations in African studies. Terms such as sustainability, transformations, ecology or agriculture in particular produces utopian and dystopian scenarios, fictional narratives, embodying different visions, powers, and hopes. By considering perspectives from various disciplines and communities, the panel intends to highlight the plurality of knowledges, the intersections of epistemologies and situated knowledge for understanding how to 'see well' and in what languages to speak out. The Southern turn; worlding epistemologies; Decolonizing Knowledge; the notion of epistemic injustice, as well as the anthropology of nature in particular, prompt us to consider how, where, and by whom legitimate knowledge is produced. The notion of orality and the call to pluralize knowledge provide an opportunity to reconsider the epistemologies through which hegemonic knowledges are constructed. These various critical perspectives, notably stemming from African societies, have raised awareness of certain ethnocentric, androcentric, technocentric, and anthropocentric prisms, while seeking to produce alternative, more inclusive, and relational narratives. Then, the question arises: how do we deal with this plurality of knowledge as scientist and what criterion must be rebuilt? What role does scientific knowledge play in the context of knowledge plurality? The responsibility of scientific narrative within its frameworks of knowledge enunciation is simultaneously an epistemological, analytical, ethical, and methodological issue.

For the fiftieth anniversary of the Swiss Society for African Studies, we invite researchers from all disciplines to share their work, methods, and reflexivity on narratives and knowledge productions, with the aim of fostering a transformative science in the service of epistemological plurality. Attention will be paid to intersectional perspectives, margins, voices, and narratives that helps to re frame human and non-human relations.

Topics of Interest:

- Postcolonial and feminist epistemologies in African contexts
- Indigenous and local knowledge systems regarding sustainability and transformations
- Utopian and dystopian narratives of development and progress
- Ethical considerations in knowledge production and dissemination
- Decolonizing methodologies in African studies
- Intersectionality and marginalized voices in narratives of sustainability
- Dialogues between human and non-human actors in sustainability discourses
- Challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse knowledges in policy and practice
- The role of storytelling and narrative in shaping narratives of sustainability
- Case studies and empirical research on sustainable practices and transformative initiatives in Africa
- Question of languages and ontologies available to formulate narratives of the desired coming worlds

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to lise.landrin@unibe.ch and hady.ba@ucad.edu.sn

Panel 1 : Épistémologies, savoirs pluriels, récits de la durabilité et des transformations

ORGANISÉ PAR:

LISE LANDRIN (UNIVERSITÉ DE BERNE)

MOUHAMADOU EL HADY BA (UNIVERSITÉ CHEIK-ANTA DIOP DE DAKAR)

L'histoire de la pensée et des actions sont traversées de récits. Les termes de durabilité, de transformations, d'écologie ou d'agriculture notamment donnent lieu à des scénarios utopiques, dystopiques, des récits fictions mais aussi des récits scientifiques et vernaculaires portant différentes visions, différents pouvoirs et différents espoirs. Or, les épistémologies postcoloniales et féministes notamment ont montré grâce aux concepts des savoirs situés et des savoirs endogènes que la question de la fabrique des savoirs était déterminante pour « bien voir » et savoir parler de « ce à quoi nous tenons ». Le *Southern turn* ; le *worlding epistemologies* ; les *Decolonizing Knowledge* ; la notion d'injustice épistémique mais aussi l'anthropologie de la nature et les productions de savoir par le bas nous invitent à penser comment, où et par qui le savoir dit légitime est produit. La notion d'oralité et l'invitation à pluraliser les savoirs sont l'occasion de réinterroger les épistémologies avec lesquelles nous fabriquons des savoirs hégémoniques et quelles transformations nous souhaitons engager. Ces différentes perspectives critiques venant notamment des sociétés africaines ont permis de prendre conscience de certains prismes ethnocentrés, androcentrés, technocentrés ou anthropocentrés en cherchant à produire des récits alternatifs, plus inclusifs et relationnels. La question qui suit est celle de savoir comment cette pluralité des savoirs amène à reconstruire des critères de scientificité. Quels rôles jouent les sciences dans l'émergence de ces pluralités ? La responsabilité du récit scientifique dans ses cadres d'énonciation des savoirs est un enjeu à la fois épistémologique, analytique, éthique et méthodologique.

Pour le cinquantenaire de la Société suisse d'études africaines, nous invitons des chercheur.es toutes disciplines confondues à partager leurs travaux, méthodes et réflexivité sur les récits et productions de savoirs dans la perspective d'une science transformative au service de la pluralité épistémologique. Une attention aux perspectives intersectionnelles ; aux marges ; aux efforts pour donner la voix ; aux recompositions entre humain et non-humain sera favorisée pour le dialogue de ce panel.

Thèmes d'intérêt :

- Épistémologies postcoloniales et féministes dans les contextes africains
- Systèmes de connaissances locaux concernant la durabilité et les transformations
- Récits utopiques et dystopiques du développement
- Considérations éthiques dans la production et la diffusion des connaissances
- Méthodologies de décolonisation dans les études africaines
- Intersectionnalité et voix marginalisées dans les récits de durabilité
- Dialogues entre acteurs humains et non humains dans les discours sur la durabilité
- Défis et opportunités d'incorporer des connaissances diverses dans les politiques et les pratiques
- Le rôle de la narration dans la formation des récits de durabilité
- Études de cas et recherches empiriques sur les pratiques durables et les initiatives transformatrices en Afrique
- Question des langues et des ontologies disponibles pour formuler les récits des mondes à venir

Les propositions d'intervention (500 mots maximum) sont à envoyer à : lise.landrin@unibe.ch et hady.ba@ucad.edu.sn

Panel 2: Impact is the Precursor to Sustainability and Transformation

CONVENORS:

JANET MICHEL, SWISS TPH, UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

JULIUS MUGWAGWA, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

JULIE BAYLEY, UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

The link between sustainability and transformation lies in the ability of a project or research to demonstrate impact. In research impact is the demonstration of health, economic and cultural benefits beyond the academic knowledge base. Many projects or research run for years, costing large amounts of funding, reporting activities and outputs, e.g. papers published yearly. In interventions, impact evaluation is often done only at the behest of the funder. As resources become scarce, researchers need to increasingly demonstrate impact of their research beyond the academic community, while programs need to demonstrate that the change seen in the outcome of interest is solely attributable to the intervention. The project has changed the lives of the beneficiaries as intended.

Researchers often argue that it is difficult to demonstrate impact. To that effect, we propose a simplified framework that enables researchers to embed impact thinking and design into their projects. This allows them to not only track and demonstrate impact but also identify the lack thereof. The central tenets of the framework are:

- Project or intervention theory of change
- Baseline measurement of outcomes of interest
- Involvement of beneficiaries in co-design, monitoring and evaluation
- Use of qualitative methodologies (Most significant change stories, realist evaluation) and quantitative indicators in the M&E plan
- Midline measurement of outcomes
- Endline evaluation of outcomes

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: janet.michel@swisstph.ch, j.mugwagwa@ucl.ac.uk, and jbayley@lincoln.ac.uk

Panel 3: Towards Sustainable Language Policies in Africa

CONVENORS:

DJOUROUKORO DIALLO, UNIVERSITY OF BERNE

BERT VAN PINXTEREN, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Since colonization and the presence of European languages in the African linguistic landscape, indigenous African languages have not become established as major instruments of official communication in post-colonial states. Despite their very strong presence in the daily lives of African populations and the importance of cross-border national languages such as Swahili, Hausa, or Bambara in the identity-building of African nations, they remain marginalized in several spheres of communication, including administration, health, education and science. As discussed by Diallo/Bearth (2022), most of the African populations have limited access to the official languages imported in the wake of colonization (English or French), creating a gap between the ordinary people and the political, intellectual, or economic elites. While exerting a certain influence on the participation and inclusion of populations in the dual process of building the nation-state and national identity, this situation provokes a linguistic imbalance between the official languages and indigenous ones. This leads to several questions: 1) What factors do (dis)favor the use of African languages in official communication? 2) What are the repercussions of the language imbalance between official languages vs. indigenous ones on the inclusion of populations in the building process of post-colonial African states? 3) What role does scientific research play in such a context?

By proposing some tentative answers to these questions, our panel invites in-depth reflection on the relationship between language policy and issues of development and identity on the continent. The panel also marks the official launch of the journal *Language Policy in Africa (LPiA)*, dedicated to language policy matters on the African continent and hosted by the Center for the Study of Language and Society (CSLS).

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: djouroukoro.diallo2@unibe.ch

Panel 4: Identifying Transformations in Africa through a Lusophone Lens: Interdisciplinary Contributions

CONVENORS:

JON SCHUBERT, UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

JÉSSICA HÖRING, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA AND UNIVERSITY OF SÃO PAULO

HIGOR CARVALHO, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

DISCUSSANT:

DIDIER PÉCLARD, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

Irrespective of the theoretical stance adopted - whether from a more neoliberal perspective viewing the continent as a business opportunity (e.g., Africa Rising) or approaches more rooted in resilience and social aspects - there is consensus: contemporary Africa is experiencing important transformations. These include demographic, social, economic, (geo)political transformations, investment flows, and ways of expressing faith and religion, among others.

Countries comprising Lusophone Africa are no exception to this movement, although research focusing on African countries beyond French and English-speaking contexts continues to receive scant attention in diverse fields. Aiming to bridge this gap and foster exchanges among researchers from different institutions, the objective of this panel is to gather research from various disciplines (e.g., political science, history, geography, cultural studies, among others) focusing on the context of transformations in Lusophone Africa. How have different disciplines positioned themselves regarding transformation processes in Portuguese-speaking African countries? What social, economic, cultural, political, and

historical dynamics can be observed in this regard?

Among the suggested themes, but not limited to them, are: a) emergence of post-colonial urban dynamics; b) transformations in capital flows, loans, and direct investments; c) transformations resulting from collective action and political parties in the colonial and post-colonial context; d) processes of political transformation, in the forms of authoritarianism and democracy, in administrative arrangements and governmentality; e) transformations in the realm of popular beliefs and religious movements; f) transformations concerning gender and diversity dimensions; g) environmental and biodiversity transformations.

The panel could yield significant academic advancements for the Africanist community. Following this inaugural meeting, we can initiate the mapping of researchers active in Portuguese-speaking Africa, contemplate publishing special issues in Africanist journals, and explore potential bilateral collaborations for articles, essays, and other publications.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: jon.schubert@unibas.ch, jessica.horing@gmail.com, and higor.carvalho@unige.ch

THEME 2: PEACE, POLITICS AND RELIGION

Panel 5: African Innovations for Sustainable Peace?

CONVENORS:

MICHAEL AEBY, UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

SAMANTHA MARIE GAMEZ, UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

The panel presents novel perspectives and innovations to promote peace and security in Africa. Since 1989, there have been more than 2,600 recorded instances of peace negotiations across the African continent in the face of an ever-changing conflict environment. From UN peacekeeping missions to mediations by African elders and traditional local dialogues, the African continent has both developed and served as testing ground for strategies to prevent, contain and transform violent conflict. The instruments for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and liberal institution-building, which the United Nations' Agenda for Peace (UN 1992) laid out in the post-Cold War era, were applied in numerous African conflicts. These instruments were adopted and modified in the African Peace & Security Architecture (APSA) of the African Union (AU), whose founders sought to devise 'African solutions'. Technical advances and evolving peacebuilding paradigms such as the local turn, women peace and security agenda, and inclusive peace have left their imprint on policies, structures and practices of the AU, sub-regional organisations, African governments, and peacebuilding NGOs. These paradigm shifts are manifest in the UN's New Agenda for Peace (2023) that prioritises gender, youth inclusion, prevention, and perils posed by climate change and emerging technologies.

However, as Cheryl Hendricks (2023) points out, a bit more inclusion and prevention in peacebuilding policies will not suffice to render an international architecture and instrumentarium that were created yesteryear fit for purpose for today's challenges and world order. She calls on researchers and practitioners to rethink actors, norms, structures, processes and practices that may be required to achieve sustainable peace. In view of the recent withdrawal of foreign missions in Africa and blockages in the AU and UN Security Council, the time may be opportune to innovate the instruments and architecture for peace and security in Africa.

This panel presents novel research and perspectives on the prevention, management and transformation of violent conflict in Africa and explores innovative approaches to promote sustainable peace. We welcome

original research on topics ranging from international mediation and peacekeeping to local and indigenous peacebuilding. We invite PhD candidates, postdocs and seasoned scholars to submit papers, and particularly welcome contributions by African colleagues. Since the panel will be held in person, we ask interested colleagues only to submit a paper if they are able to present it at the University of Bern.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: michael.aeby@unibas.ch and samantha.gamez@unibas.ch

Panel 6: Is China's Ppresence in Africa Sustainable?

CONVENORS:

ANTOINE KERNEN, UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE
GÉRARD AMOUGOU, UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDÉ II
FABIEN NKOT, UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDÉ II

For several years now, research has been focusing on the impact of China's economic emergence in Africa. The circulation of people, products and knowledge is transforming trade networks, forms of entrepreneurship, and sources and methods of access to knowledge and modernity. The emergence of this new player is changing power relations, the strategy of extraversion and the governance of African states. Beyond their abundance and great diversity, recent works all emphasize the importance of the changes underway and the agency of African players to take advantage of this new situation.

The question of the sustainability of these transformations is present in these studies, even if it is rarely the main focus. Increased competition for raw materials is generating additional income for producer countries, but it is also intensifying extraction through the multiplication and diversification of players active in these sectors. Easier access to international funding means that dams can be built to make up for shortfalls in energy production, but this has an impact on the environment of hitherto untouched areas. The mass consumption of lower-cost products imported from Asia has led to the discovery of the 'joys of consumerism' and the development of a new entrepreneurial spirit, but the arrival of disposable Chinese products has not strengthened short supply chains. There is no doubt that the emergence of China does not call into question a development model in Africa that some believe to be outdated.

In this panel, we particularly encourage contributions that question the multiplicity and diversity of the transformations brought about by the emergence of China. As far as possible, it would be interesting to try and link them with the theme of sustainability or the recent changes in Chinese policy towards Africa.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: antoine.kernen@unil.ch and amou_gerard@yahoo.fr

Panel 6: La présence chinoise en Afrique est-elle durable ?

ORGANISÉ PAR:

ANTOINE KERNEN, UNIVERSITÉ DE LAUSANNE
GÉRARD AMOUGOU, UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ II
FABIEN NKOT, UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ II

Depuis plusieurs années, des travaux s'intéressent à l'impact de l'émergence économique de la Chine en Afrique. Les circulations de personnes, de produits et des savoirs transforment les réseaux commerciaux, les formes d'entrepreneuriat, les sources et les modalités d'accès aux savoir et à la modernité. L'émergence de ce nouvel acteur modifie les rapports de pouvoir, les modalités de l'extraversion et la gouvernance des États africains. Au-delà de leur abondance et de leur grande diversité, les travaux récents soulignent tous

l'importance des changements en cours et l'agencéité des acteurs africains pour tirer avantage de cette nouvelle donne.

La question de la durabilité de ces transformations est présente dans ces travaux mais souvent en creux. Le renforcement de la concurrence pour les matières premières engendre des revenus supplémentaires pour les pays producteurs, mais aussi une intensification de leur extraction au travers d'une multiplication et d'une diversification des acteurs actifs dans ces secteurs. Un accès plus aisé à des financements internationaux permet la construction de barrages pour pallier aux manques de production d'énergie, mais impacte l'environnement de régions préservées. La massification de la consommation de produits à moindre coût importés d'Asie permet la découverte des « joies de la consommation » et le développement d'un nouvel entrepreneuriat, mais l'arrivée de produits jetables chinois ne renforce pas les circuits courts. Nul doute que l'émergence de la Chine ne remet pas en question en Afrique un modèle de développement que certains pensent dépassé.

Dans ce panel, nous encourageons particulièrement les interventions qui questionnent la multiplicité et la diversité des transformations induites par l'émergence de la Chine. Dans la mesure du possible, il serait intéressant de chercher à les articuler avec le thème de la durabilité ou les inflexions récentes de la politique chinoise à l'égard de l'Afrique.

Les propositions d'intervention (500 mots maximum) sont à envoyer à : antoine.kernen@unil.ch and amou_gerard@yahoo.fr

Panel 7: Religious Institutionalization in Africa: Organizational Practices and Individual Experiences

CONVENORS:

FEDERICO CARDUCCI, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

SALOMÉ OKOEPEN, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

BASSIROU GAYE, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

Religion in Africa has undergone major institutional changes in recent years as a result of a series of post-colonial social transformations. These changes include urbanization, population growth, the effects of structural adjustment programs, religious and political pluralization and access to new media. Today, these institutional changes in the religious sphere are significantly accentuated, with religious organizations and movements adopting new forms of authority and administration inspired by bureaucracy in the Weberian sense of the term. These include the formalization and codification of roles and functions, access to positions of responsibility and their renewal through elections, the observance of manuals of procedure in the conduct of activities, the regular holding of meetings and assemblies, the production of activity reports, and so on. Depending on their size and objectives, religious organizations may have several levels of institutionalization: national, regional, or local offices, a national executive secretariat, a department for planning, monitoring and evaluating activities, etc. This is not to mention the effectiveness of the organization itself. Without going into the effectiveness of institutionalization within these organizations, it should be noted that their organizational chart seems well established, as does the distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Given the extent of this institutionalization within religious movements in the African context, particularly Muslim and Christian organizations, this panel proposes to highlight, through a dialogue between several fields of research, the forms that this institutionalization takes and the way in which these movements appropriate and practice it. While discussing the failures, difficulties and adjustments of this institutionalization, this panel will show, on the one hand, how it shapes individual religious experiences and, on the other hand, how this institutionalization is influenced, reshaped, and even reappropriated by the people, according to their positions and their own objectives.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: Federico.carducci@unige.ch, Salome.okoekpen@unige.ch and Bassirou.Gaye@unige.ch

Panel 8: Women of Faith: Women's Rights and Religious Associations in and beyond Africa

CONVENOR:

CLAIRE NICOLAS, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

This interdisciplinary panel offers to investigate women-led religious associations in Africa in the 20th and 21st centuries. Between sociology and history, this panel is interested in women from the African continent who chose to enter religious associations at regional, national, or international levels. Informed by recent scholarship that unpacked the complicated intersection between religion and women's rights as well as between feminism and internationalism, we ask the two following sets of questions.

First, we ask how women's rights and anticolonial fighters weave religious networks with emancipatory practices and discourses. As they situate themselves as religious women, we intend to analyse how these women articulate this position with entwined political discourses—with special reference to women's rights discourses, and to nationalist and anti-imperialist ideas.

Second, we ask how African women define their political and social relationships within religious networks, at the local, national, or global scale. As we explore a large variety of networks (ranging from the World Council of Church to national Young Women's Christian Associations, to local religious Muslim networks), in Africa or among the diaspora, we intend to explore if/how African women address and challenge inequalities related to gender, race and/or class at play within these networks.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: claire.nicolas@unige.ch

THEME 3: ECOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD

Panel 9: Land Use and Land Cover across Africa – Present, Dynamics and Futures

CONVENORS:

CHINWE IFEJIKI SPERANZA, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

PAULE PAMELA TABI ECKEBIL, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

Land use and land cover across Africa are complex and dynamic systems. Understanding the past and present patterns of land use and land cover is crucial for identifying potential future changes and pathways potential sustainable land management options, and strategies to enhance the resilience of land use systems. Land use and land cover vary widely across Africa, with different regions experiencing different patterns of change and pressures on natural resources. Yet some general drivers can be identified and include population growth, urbanization, agricultural expansion, mining, government policies, market demands, climate variability and climate change. These drivers interact with one another and with local socio-economic and political factors to shape land use and land cover dynamics in different ways. Despite the challenges posed by these drivers, opportunities for sustainable land use and land cover management also abound across Africa.

We seek papers that explore African land use and land cover from different perspectives:

- African Land use and land cover: What is the status of African land use and land cover and what trajectories of change can be identified?

- Sustainable Land Management: How widespread are the strategies for sustainable land management, including ecosystem services, conservation of biodiversity, protection of ecosystems, and promotion of sustainable agriculture practices? What challenges do they face and how can opportunities be harnessed?
- Community Engagement and Indigenous Knowledge: Engaging with local and Indigenous communities in land use planning and decision-making processes promises that traditional and indigenous knowledge, local needs, and perspectives are considered in land use systems. What are the experiences made so far, and what are the prospects for people and nature?
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change on land use, and opportunities for climate change mitigation through afforestation, reforestation, land restoration and sustainable land use practices are promising. What have been the realities in various African landscapes?
- Policy and Governance: Land use policies are crucial for ensuring progress towards the sustainable development goals. How effective have such policies been in fostering progress towards such goals and how do they consider the interests of various stakeholders and pathways for strengthening governance structures to enforce land use regulations and ensure sustainable practices?
- Certification and standards for sustainable land use systems: Demand for natural resources such as agricultural and forest products as well as minerals have been beneficial for local livelihoods and economies. However, they also challenge the sustainable use of land and sustainable local livelihoods. Certifications and standards have been put forward nationally and internationally as instruments to minimise land degradation and deforestation and to incentivise sustainable land use and management. How effective have they been and what prospects do they have in ensuring sustainable agricultural and forest commodities?
- Scenario Planning for the Future: Scenario planning and modelling techniques enable imagining future land use. What do such scenarios inform about potential changes in the African landscapes and opportunities for more sustainable land use?

We look forward to receiving your submissions on any of the above-mentioned topics and to discussing them with you.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: chinwe.ifejika.speranza@unibe.ch and paule.tabieckebil@unibe.ch

Panel 10: Food and Nutrition in Africa Facing Transformations: Past, Present and Future

CONVENORS :

SONIA MERTEN, SWISS TPH, BASEL

ANNE MAYOR, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

TOBIAS HALLER, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

African food systems have undergone massive changes and are subject to interdisciplinary research. In order to understand current food challenges in Africa, we need archaeological, historical and contemporary research including social, cultural as well as natural science approaches from botany, zoology to nutritional and epidemiological disciplines working in collaboration with local societies. This panel asks for contributions from a multidisciplinary, gender sensitive and transdisciplinary perspective to shed light on food transformations in Africa, which is subject to a western crisis discourse and underdevelopment narrative. We ask for contributions focussing on different time periods and topics stretching from analysis of food production to issues of property systems to land and land-related resources (e.g. forestry, fisheries, pastures, veld) undergoing change, which have an impact on local food systems and their resilience. The impact on changing food consumption patterns is of equal interest as are culturally different ontologies, epistemologies, and local ecological knowledge on food and nutrition. Finally, we welcome contributions, which look at historical/colonial legacies and their impact on food systems such as transformations in the context of expanding global capitalist markets and conservation endeavours impacting on communally

organised food production.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: sonja.merten@swisstph.ch, anne.mayor@unige.ch, and tobias.haller@unibe.ch

Panel 11: Agroecology in Sub-Saharan Africa: Sovereign Transformations or New Recipe for Development Arenas?

CONVENORS :

PATRICK BOTTAZZI, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

SÉBASTIEN BOILLAT, SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL, FOREST AND FOOD SCIENCES, ZOLLIKOFEN

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is facing unprecedented challenges related to food sovereignty, exacerbated by climate change and often neocolonial and postcolonial public policies oriented on industrial agriculture. In this context, agroecology, understood as a science, a practice and a social movement, offers a window of opportunity for sustainable and just food system transformation.

As a matter of fact, agroecological movements in SSA are increasingly tied to an active civil society with deep transformation demands including resistance to extractivism and to neocolonial agrarian regimes. Nevertheless, they are also growingly supported by international initiatives and multi- and bilateral cooperation, which are steering agricultural and environmental policies towards more sustainable approaches. While multi-level collaborations offer prospects for true transformation, agroecological movements also risk being co-opted by alliances between international elites and development actors who push them towards less transformative goals.

In this session, we address critically the transformative power of agroecological transitions in SSA. We focus on processes that might limit them to superficial reforms or to the contrary, empowering them towards food sovereignty and environmental sustainability while respecting the needs and rights of local populations.

We welcome theoretical or case studies contributions on this topic from multidisciplinary perspectives, focus on following possible research questions:

- What role does civil society play in shaping agro-environmental policies? What are the collective action repertoires that serve as levers for transformation?
- What are the dominant or emerging discourses on "sustainability" of food systems in SSA? How do these discourses influence the processes of developing or reformulating national agrarian policies?
- What are the methods and approaches that can support just agroecological transformations in SSA?
- What are the levers and/or barriers to transforming conventional agrarian regimes toward more sustainable and just agroecological food systems?
- To what extent do these initiatives tend to contribute increasing or reducing intersectional inequalities and justice aspects?

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: Patrick.bottazzi@unibe.ch and sebastien-pierre.boillat@bfh.ch

THEME 4: HISTORY AND ECONOMY OF URBAN SPACES

Panel 12: Building the Sustainable African City

CONVENORS:

PHILIPA BIRAGO AKUOKO, CDE, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

FANNY VOÉLIN, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

Facing high rates of urbanization and increasing climate risks, African cities are pictured as needing urgent transformation towards economic growth, productivity, and resilience. As this transformation will be costly, a range of international actors are working on rendering African cities investable through administrative capacity building, governance reforms, and infrastructure development. National and municipal governments have largely appropriated this global agenda to legitimize large-scale infrastructure projects aiming at bringing African cities at par with 'global cities'. Yet such projects are at odds with the needs of the vast majority of urban dwellers who keep facing situations of high precariousness. Their implementation has triggered diverse instances of social unrest, particularly due to competing claims on urban land.

To investigate current patterns of urban transformation in Africa, we invite contributions that explore – but are not limited to – the following questions:

- In what ways and for what purposes are global discourses and agendas pertaining to development, resilience and sustainability appropriated by local, municipal and national actors?
- To what extent do contemporary planning policies and infrastructure development contribute to respond to social and environmental issues in urban Africa or, on the contrary, to reinforce existing injustices?
- How do urban dwellers negotiate and resist urban projects and how do they contribute to a more just and sustainable urban future?

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: philipa.akuoko@unibe.ch and fanny.voelin@unibe.ch

Panel 13: Urban Commons in Africa: Sustainable City Development beyond Market and State?

CONVENORS:

SAMUEL AGYEKUM, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

TIMOTHY ADAMS, UNIVERSITY OF BERN & OXFORD UNIVERSITY

JEAN-DAVID GERBER, UNIVERSITY OF BERN

Urban Africa has seen rapid increase in resource consumption since the turn of the century. Despite the conventional belief that the state and market possess the requisite capacity to address associated land development issues, recent reality checks have seriously questioned these provisioning systems. Self-governed systems, which constitute resources and a community of commoners, are increasingly appraised by various disciplines as an alternative to the conventional separation between the market and the state. These systems can significantly contribute to local, horizontal, and inclusive decision-making, regenerative social and environmental ecologies, and goods and rights that are inalienable and favour sustainability.

In this context, the proposed panel aims to bring together experts and scholars from different disciplines to explore urban and peri-urban commons critically. The panel will examine different types of resources, such as green spaces, housing, food-supply chains. These critical discussions will address essential questions, such as the types of commons that exist across urban Africa, the rules that makes them work, and their contribution to urban sustainability. It will also address the emergence of self-governed systems in urban-metropolitan areas, despite othering, such as race, gender, class, occupation, ethnicity, religion, and the political and institutional systems, enabling the commons to expand across differences within the urban environment. Finally, it will explore the socio-ecological outcomes of these commons, questioning their potential contribution to alternative urban development models and opening the question of post-growth options in African cities.

This panel offers a unique opportunity to examine this vital topic and provide insights into African urban areas' challenges. Join us as we delve into these critical issues and explore innovative solutions.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: samuel.agyekum@unibe.ch,

timothy.adams@unibe.ch and jean-david.gerber@unibe.ch

Panel 14: Transforming West African Cities in the mid-20th Century

CONVENOR:

PEDRO CERDEIRA, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

DISCUSSANT:

CLAIRE NICOLAS, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

While African cities were not born out of the colonial process, many Africans accessed cities through the colonial city. In the 1950s especially, this triggered new debates over gendered, and generational relations, as access to schooling or waged employment disrupted previous social hierarchies. This was closely connected to intense circulations between rural and urban spaces, as temporary stays and permanent city dwellers' trajectories became intertwined. These social changes were the product of post-war developmentalism and reform which found expression both in unprecedented investment in urban areas and in the complexification of city government. This panel thus questions the making of West African cities in the 1950s as they expanded—from a demographic and spatial point of view.

The panel questions the emergence of new administrations, leisure practices, solidarity networks etc. It intends to gather contributions inquiring different processes of transformation of the urban space and population in post-war colonial West Africa, welcoming contributions which focus on either political, social or cultural dynamics.

The following approaches are favoured, though not exclusively:

- **Political and administrative landscapes:** This axis investigates the changes in the administration of urban spaces and populations, notably by looking into institutions such as European-style municipalities and African traditional authorities, as well as into housing and urban management policies. We see these institutions as dynamic ones, where options for the African city conflicted.
- **Leisure and sociability:** A wide array of formal and informal social circles developed in post-war African cities, organised along professional, ethnic, gender, generational, or religious lines. The panel hopes to reflect on how leisure activities were transformed by—and transformed—African cities.
- **Urban tensions:** Urban change induced exclusion and tensions, either within cities, or in relation to rural spaces. How did urban colonial policies induce exclusion and inequality? How did colonial local government respond to dynamics of change? We are interested in welcoming papers which interrogate logics of repression and control in the 1950s urban West Africa.

Paper proposals (500 words max) should be sent to: pedro.cerdeira@unige