

### Message from PAS director Chris Abani



Well, it is that time again for the director's message. Recently, sculptor, poet, and artist, Adegoke Tugbigele, in an Instagram post brought our attention to the Yoruba word, *Adupe*. *Adupe* means gratitude.

In Yoruba when we ask, how are you, the response is, we are grateful. Grateful for the question, for implied care being shown to us. Grateful for life and health and the ability to answer the question, and in the affirmative. Grateful to be part of an ethnic, spiritual, and linguistic lineage that provides depth and reflexivity within the quotidian. In a way, it is linked to *Iba* or praise. In the Yoruba worldview, the orientation of being is toward reverence and respect for those who have come before you, including deities. This approach is embedded in a concept of time, *lae lae*, that is historical, current, and leaning forward into time and culture, simultaneously.

In this holiday season, we often struggle with gratitude—either toward or away from lineage and tradition. Luckily, the tradition and culture here at the Program of African Studies, the

Institute for Islamic Thought in Africa, and the whole arena of African Studies at Northwestern, has been one of inclusivity, of interdisciplinary, and intercontinental approaches to the research

we do; all of which makes gratitude easy for me and a perfect condition of our world view.

As we go through this season of birth and rebirth, the defined nature of midwestern winters reminds us very starkly of this process, and since we are moving into a new way of operating, having undergone a two-year restructuring during a pandemic, while keeping the doors open metaphorically and in recent months, literally, gratitude is foremost on our minds.

Thanks to the generosity of the Office of Research, we have launched a new fellowship program and the building has been partially refurbished. This has made it possible for an exciting new energy surge through the building. Different members of our community have held meetings, student conferences, lunches, and watched the World Cup together as a community. This has been rewarding.

As we prepare for a new academic year, we are hoping to make many new announcements of upcoming changes to our offerings, events, and the service we provide. But, in keeping with the theme of gratitude, I would like to thank the staff here: our newest addition Kati, and regulars Meagan, Kelly, Rebecca, LaRay, and Peter. Without your diligence and vast skill sets, we would not be able to do what we can. Thanks to the members of the committee who have steered us right: Will Reno, Zachary Wright, Annelise Riles, Bimbola Akinbola, and Evan Mwangi. And thanks to all the faculty and students in African studies, from the continent and all our affiliates campuswide. Finally, but not least, to the wider community of African studies, many thanks. Best of the season to all of you! *Adupe O!*

*Named director of the Program of African Studies in 2020, Chris Abani is a Board of Trustees Professor of English at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and director of graduate studies for the Litowitz Creative Writing Graduate Program.*

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## Wana Udobang opens traveling exhibition “Dirty Laundry” in Abuja

Ama Ata Aidoo Arts Fellow Wana Udobang presented her first mixed media installation, “Dirty Laundry,” in Abuja on December 15–20, 2022. The traveling installation had earlier opened in Lagos in April at Whitespace Ikoyi. It then traveled to Port Harcourt where the exhibition was mounted at The Boys Quarters Project Space, which was once the old office of human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. The Abuja exhibition opened in December at the Atrium of the Shehu Musa Yar’adua Foundation in Abuja, following the end of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

This installation is an immersive experience interconnecting personal narratives, histories, experiences, and imaginaries as a form of catharsis for the poet and the viewer. Featuring poems screen printed on canvas hanging from laundry lines, the installation also included thought-provoking performances that explore issues around womanhood, sexual and gender violence, feminine agency, healing, and reimagination.

The hanging poems tell many personal stories for the viewer to experience while walking through the space, a physical representation of the metaphor “hanging your dirty laundry in public.” The event was accompanied by talk presentations and online discussions on the role of art in social justice movements or activism that seeks to create change.

Udobang observes that “Every day, we see how our cultures and societies repress the voices of women and girls. We continue to lose women and girls to sexual and intimate partner violence. I believe in Nina Simone’s statement that “an artist must reflect the times.” As an artist, I hope this exhibition is not only documenting and reflecting the insidious ways that women are violated in both our domestic and public lives but that it shows the ways we utilize imagination to heal.”

“Dirty Laundry” received support from the Ford Foundation.

## Northwestern Africanists participate in annual ASA meeting

The theme of the 2022 African Studies Association meeting was “African Urbanities, Mobility and Challenges,” which met in Philadelphia in November. A highlight of the meeting was the award of the prestigious Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize to **David Schoenbrun** (history) for his book, *The Names of the Python: Belonging in East Africa, 900-1930* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press).

**Dotun Ayobade** (School of Communication) presented a paper, “Jelili Atiku, Performing Atonement,” and served as a discussant on the panel, “Medicine, Health, and Wellness in Nigerian History.”

**David Schoenbrun** chaired a panel, “Gender, Ritual and Knowledge Production as Sources of Power.”

Visiting scholar **Paul Naylor** presented a paper, “Hiding in Plain Sight: Truly Local Knowledge Traditions in the Libraries of Timbuktu.”

Four graduate students presented papers and chaired panels:

**Bright Gyamfi** (history) cochaired the panel, “Connecting Space and Challenging the State Politics of Knowledge in the Africana World,” and contributed a paper, “Nkrumahist Scholars and the Project of Black Studies.”

**Austin Bryan** (anthropology) chaired the panel, “Social Intervention, Materialities and Technologies in Contemporary Africa,” and contributed a paper, “State Narratives on Genocide, Contemporary Art, and Investment in Rwanda’s Economy of Hope.”

**Omoyemi Ajisebutu** (comparative literary studies) chaired the panel “Transitions in African Migration Narratives.”

**Fortunate Kelechi Ekwuruke** (human development and social policy) and alumna **Sally Nuamah** (human development and social policy) copresented a paper, “Becoming an “Empowered Woman: African Girlhood Development Agendas.”

Many PAS alumni participated:

## Funding opportunities for African Studies research

### African Research Leadership

**Awards** of up to \$4,000 are granted for students who wish to develop and lead a research project related to African studies. The project may build on the African studies adjunct major’s research/immersion experience or extend research done in a past course. Open to all first- through third-year undergraduates; African studies adjunct majors and minors receive preference. Applications are due April 15.

**Morris Goodman Language Awards** of up to \$3,000 help enable graduate students to study an African language taught outside Northwestern. Students may learn from a qualified Chicagoarea tutor or travel for language study through programs such as Fulbright-Hays Language Group Projects Abroad and the Summer Cooperative African Language Institute. The grant normally supports 60 hours of tutoring; for other types of study, students must provide a syllabus, evaluations, and other course information. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

### Hans E. Panofsky Predissertation

**Research Awards** of up to \$2,000 are granted to graduate students to evaluate research opportunities, conduct predissertation fieldwork, arrange institutional affiliation, or conduct archival research in Africa. Doctoral students who have completed their second year of coursework and will seek candidacy the following year are eligible to apply. Students who completed a master’s degree before studying at Northwestern and are ready for predissertation fieldwork after their first year may also apply. Applicants must be enrolled at Northwestern both when they apply and in the quarter immediately following their research trips. Participants in AfriSem and other PAS activities receive preference. Applicants must concurrently seek predissertation research support from other sources. Application deadline is April 2.

**Guyer-Virman Awards** of \$200–\$400 help enable graduate students in their third year or beyond to travel to archives or participate in conferences. Applications are accepted on a rolling

basis.

**The John Hunwick Research Fund** supports faculty and graduate student research on Islam in Africa. Awards may be used for travel to archives, fieldwork sites, or conferences or to organize a campus visit or lecture by a scholar of Islam and Africa. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

**PAS Travel Awards** offer graduate and undergraduate students up to \$250 to defray the costs of participating in an Africa-related conference, usually to present a paper. Students must apply in advance of the conference, but funds may be released at a later date. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Complete application instructions for all awards can be found at [africanstudies.northwestern.edu/research/funding/index.html](https://africanstudies.northwestern.edu/research/funding/index.html). Questions? Please email [african-studies@northwestern.edu](mailto:african-studies@northwestern.edu) or call 847-491-7323.

**Lorelle Semley** (College of the Holy Cross) chaired a roundtable, “Pivoting, Planning, and Publishing in *History in Africa*.”

**Lynn Thomas** (University of Washington) chaired a panel, “US/East Africa Historical Entanglements since the 1980s,” and presented a paper, “From North Carolina to Nairobi’s Ward 6: Abortion Provision and Politics between the United States and Kenya,” and participated in the roundtable, “Reproductive Rights after the End of Roe: Implications for the Africanist Community.”

**Jean Allman** (The Africa Institute) participated in the roundtable, “The Sixth International Congress of African and African Diaspora Studies ICAADS.”

**Amy Swanson** (Colgate University) chaired the panel, “Performance, Liveness, and Social Justice: Dancing across Senegal and Burkina Faso,” and presented a paper, “The Obscuring the Body: Street Performance in Post-Pandemic Dakar.”

**Brett Shadle** (Virginia Tech) served as chair and discussant on the panel, “Women and Gender in Collective Memory and Public History, Part 2.”

**Caitlin Monroe** (University of Northern Colorado) presented a paper, “Of Cattle and Kings: Women’s Public History and the Gendering of the Historical Discipline of Uganda, 1870-Present.”

**Raevin Jimenez** (University of Michigan), presented the paper “It Will Be Said that His Words Are Unclean’: Rethinking Hloipha as a Gendered Site of Marginalization.”

**Nana Akua Anyidoho** (University of Ghana) cochaired the roundtable, “Publish that Article: Meet the Editors,” and participated in the roundtables, “When Women Speak,” parts I and II.

**Christopher Day** (College of Charleston) chaired the panel on “Governance and Armed Groups,” and presented a paper, “Wolves in Wolves Clothing: The Role of Uganda’s Military in Uganda’s Parliament.”

**Praise Zenenga** (University of Arizona) presented a paper, “The Impact of Covid-19 on Traveling Urban Musicians in Zimbabwe.”

**Michael Tuck** (Northeastern Illinois University) presented a paper, “The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Cycle of Resistance along the Gambia River in the 18th century.”

## African-led peace operations: Enhancing effectiveness

By Eric G. Berman

Last August, the East African Community became the 14th regional organization on that continent to deploy a peace operation (see Table below). The mission in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo is certain to encounter resistance among many of the hundred-plus nonstate armed groups active in the subregion. These groups secure considerable quantities of lethal materiel from uniformed personnel—both peacekeepers and national security forces serving within or near these missions’ areas of operation. Much can be done to reduce such diversion.

Enhancing the effectiveness of African-led peace operations is especially important and worthy of support as these organizations will remain significant actors for the foreseeable future. Without minimizing the shortcomings and challenges many such missions have faced, numerous deployments have helped promote human security and ushered in beneficial political change. These objectives have often been achieved at considerable cost and sacrifice by the troop-contributing countries. Moreover, regardless of their track record, the United Nations (UN) Security Council is not likely to “re-hat” these missions as readily as they have in the past.

The security threats facing these missions, however, are quite grave. The African Union (AU)-led peace operations in Somalia, for example, have come under repeated attack from al-Shabaab, losing considerable lethal materiel as a result. Between June 2015 and January 2016, that armed group overran three forward operating bases—military camps housing more than 100 uniformed personnel with associated equipment to allow them to be self-sufficient, often at extended periods—of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In May of last year, al-Shabaab again overran such a base in the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which succeeded AMISOM last April. These two operations have likely lost millions of rounds of ammunition, thousands of firearms, and many hundreds of crew-served light weapons (such as heavy

machine guns and mortars) to their adversary.

Materiel that armed groups have seized from African-led peace operations includes heavy weapons systems. The Islamic State’s West Africa Province (ISWAP) and the al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) have looted the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the Joint Force of the Group of Five Sahel (FC-G5S), respectively. Items stolen include battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, and both self-propelled as well as towed multiple-launch rocket systems.

The UN, which has undertaken peace operations for over 70 years, also has experienced challenges in securing lethal materiel in its missions. Eight months after the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked and overran an AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) base, the successor UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) lost 600,000 rounds of ammunition when a convoy transporting contingent-owned equipment was attacked and the container of munitions seized.

That said, the UN has numerous well-established checks and balances to keep tabs on arms and ammunition deployed in its missions. For example, it has quarterly on-site checks of materiel, well-resourced investigations into diversion incidents, and reimbursement mechanisms to encourage transparency and accountability. African regional organizations lack equivalent administrative practices and procedures.

Such checks and balances that do exist to manage such equipment in African-led peace operations are often not fully utilized. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a case in point. It has a convention that came into force more than ten years ago that calls on its 15 member states to record and report materiel taken into a peace operation, resupplied, destroyed, or taken back when it withdraws. This is to be done whether ECOWAS, the UN, or some other entity undertakes the mission. These stipulations—on paper—represent a global best practice. Were they to be followed, ECOWAS could quickly determine what materiel was used or lost after deployment and make appropriate inquiries. Details concerning implementation are not made public, but it is widely understood that member states’ adherence

African regional organizations that have undertaken peace operations (year first mission was authorized or deployed)				
ANAD* (1986) <b>AU</b> (2002) CEMAC (2003)	CEN-SAD (2001) <b>EAC</b> (2022) ECCAS (2008)	<b>ECOWAS</b> (1990) FLS* (1986) <b>G5S</b> (2017)	<b>ICGLR</b> (2008) <b>IGAD</b> (2003) <b>LCBC</b> (1998)	OAU* (1980) <b>SADC</b> (1998)
Source:	Eric G. Berman, “Beyond Blue Helmets: Promoting Weapons and Ammunition Management in Non-UN Peace Operations,” Geneva: Small Arms Survey, Report Series. March 2019, pp. 29-31; and Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Data Set, unpublished.			
Key::	* = organizations no longer extant in 2022. (FLS disbanded in 1994. ANAD and OAU ceased operations in 2001.) <b>BOLD</b> = organization currently (as of January 2023) fielding a peace operation (which includes unarmed observer missions)			
Abbreviations:	ANAD = Treaty of Non-Aggression, Assistance, and Mutual Defence AU = African Union CEMAC = Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa CEN-SAD = Community of Sahel-Saharan States EAC = East African Community ECCAS = Economic Community of Central African States ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States FLS = Front-Line States G5S = Group of Five Sahel ICGLR = International Conference for the Great Lakes Region IGAD = Intergovernmental Authority for Development LCBC = Lake Chad Basin Commission OAU = Organization for African Unity SADC = Southern African Development Community			

to their commitments is limited, despite their being legally binding.

This disconnect between expectation and reality is especially important to address because so many ECOWAS member states participate in peace operations. ECOWAS currently fields two missions: one in The Gambia and another in Guinea-Bissau. But these are relatively small and also relatively peaceful (although, last January, the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) attacked Senegalese troops serving in the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) and disarmed them). More critical for oversight purposes are the FC-G5S, MNJTF, and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which operate in less permissive environments and peacekeepers come under attack routinely.

Also of note is a new AU policy adopted to promote the management of recovered lethal materiel in peace operations that it authorizes or mandates. When they undertake formal disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs, these initiatives usually include funding for storehouses and procedures for record-keeping. But many such undertakings recover materiel outside DDR through cordon-and-search activities or clashes with hostile forces. Since oversight and resources have been lacking, the new policies are meant to improve on previous practice. This includes

ATMIS, FC-G5S, and MNJTF. Progress is slow-going.

A challenge African-led operations have is that the secretariats overseeing their implementation are not adequately staffed. This is not a criticism of officials’ work ethic or expertise but rather a comment on the mismatch between mandates and resources. There are too few staff in relation to the work needed. The long-standing recruitment freeze at ECOWAS has recently been lifted, which should bring relief. The AU, however, remains woefully understaffed, which is not likely to change in the short term.

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities is an essential first step. More appropriate staffing alone will not solve the problem, and yet it is essential to ensure that existing checks and balances are promoted and used. Member States and external donors must become aware of available frameworks and policies and incorporate them in their discourse and priorities. And the counter-terrorism, development, and security sector governance communities, among others, should acknowledge their important role in enhancing weapons and ammunition management in peace operations, help generate appropriate resources, and set the agenda. The deployment of peacekeepers ought not to add fuel to the fires they are trying to extinguish.

*Eric G. Berman is director of the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Initiative ([www.s-4.org](http://www.s-4.org)) and a visiting scholar at the Program of African Studies. He can be reached at [director@s-4.org](mailto:director@s-4.org).*



## Community News

**Semiu Adefemi Adegbenle** (history graduate student) coauthored a chapter, "Female Deputy Governors as Subaltern in Lagos Politics, 1999-2019," in *Gender Politics and Governance in Africa*, edited by Mutiat Oladejo (Nigeria: Reamsworth, 2021).

**Austin Bryan** (anthropology graduate student) published a chapter, "Kuchu Activism, Queer Sex-Work and 'Lavender Marriages' in Uganda's Virtual LGBT Safe(r) Spaces," in *Politics in Africa in a Digital Age*, edited by Sharath Srinivasan et al. (Routledge, 2022), chapter 6; and an article, "Security Begins with You": Compulsory Heterosexuality, Registers of Gender and Sexuality, and Transgender Women Getting by in Kampala, Uganda," *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society* 4(1), 2021, DOI: 10.1080/25729861.2021.1984640

Alumna **Catherine M. Cole** (1996) has a chapter, "Does Revenge Fall Softly? Yaël Farber's Molera," in *Critical perspectives on Contemporary Plays by Women: The Twenty-First Century*, edited by Leslie Ferris and Penny Farfan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021): 41-49. Cole serves as Divisional Dean of the Arts, College of Letters and Sciences, and Professor of English and Dance at the University of Washington.

Alumnus **William Fitzsimons** (2020) published a chapter, "Social Responses to Climate Change in a

Politically Decentralized Context: A Case Study from East African History," in *Perspectives on Public Policy in Societal-Environmental Crises*, edited by A. Izdebski, J. Haldon, and Piotr Filipkowski (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022): 145-159.

Alumna **Raevin Jimenez** (2018) published "Food Production, Environment, and Mobility among Late Iron Age Nguni-speakers of South Africa," *Quaternary International* 611-612 (2022): 211-219.

Alumna **Kathryn de Luna** (2008) coauthored a chapter "Lessons for Modern Environmental and Climate Policy from Iron Age South Central Africa," *Perspectives on Public Policy in Societal-Environmental Crises*, edited by A. Izdebski, J. Haldo, and Piotr Filipkowski (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022): 191-204. She also published "Sounding the African Atlantic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 78(4), 2021: 581-616.

Alumnus **Jahara Matisek** (2018) coauthored "Supporting African Partner States through Military Assistance Programmes," *The RUSI Journal* 167(3), 2022: 42-53.

In December, the Buffett Institute held a virtual conversation with alumna **Sakhile Matlhare** (2017). She discussed her experience as cofounder and art director of Sakhile & Me, an international exhibition and research space working with established and

young contemporary artists, curators, critics, and researchers - with a particular focus on Africa and her diasporas.

**Salih Noor** (political science graduate student) has accepted a position as assistant professor of political science at Lafayette College.

Alumnus **Patrick Mbullo Owuor** (2022) coauthored numerous articles: "The Impact of Moringa Oleifera Leaf Supplementation on Human and Animal Nutrition, Growth, and Milk Production: A Systematic Review," *Phytotherapy Research* 36(4), 2022: 1600-1615; "Investigating the Impact of Moringa Oleifera Supplemented to Kenyan Breastfeeding Mothers on Maternal and Infant Health: A Cluster Randomized Single-blinded Controlled Pilot Protocol," *JPG Reports* 3(3), 2022: e237; "Nutrient Dense Moringa Oleifera Leaf Supplementation Increases Human Milk Output in Western Kenyan Mothers," *Current Developments in Nutrition* 6 (supplement\_1), 2022: 620; "Knowledge Comes through Participation": Understanding Disability through the Lens of DIY Assistive Technology in Western Kenya," *Proceedings of the ACM on Human Computer Interaction* 6i (CSCW1), 2022: 1-25; "Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Initiation and Retention among Young Kenyan Women," *AIDS and Behavior*, 2022: 1-11; and "Mind the Gaps for the Best Practices: Enhancing the Management

of Lake Victoria Fisheries Resources," *Lakes & Reservoirs Research & Management* 27, 2022; e12411, doi.org/10.1111/lre.12411.

Alumna **Jessica Pouchet** (2019) published "Negotiating Expendability in Crisis: Conservation and Biopolitics in Tanzania," *American Ethnologist* 49(1): 2022: 50-63; and "A Double Standard in Development Encounters: Language and the Making of Green Entrepreneurs in Tanzania," *Anthropological Quarterly* 95(1), 2022: 65-96.

Alumna **Susanna Sacks** (2019) published "Slam Poetry in Malawi: Digital Media Aesthetics and Translingual Poetic Forms," in *Digital Technology and Languages in African Communities and Classrooms: Innovations and Opportunities*, edited by Leketi Makelela and Goodith White (Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters Press (2021). She is now assistant professor of comparative literature at Howard University.

**Zekeria Ahmed Salem** (ISITA and political science) presented a seminar paper, "Global Sinqit: Mauritania's Islamic Knowledge Tradition and the Making of Transnational Religious Authority (19th-21st C.)," at the Humanities Research Fellowships for the Study of the Arab World, New York University/Abu Dhabi.

**David Schoenbrun** (history) published "Vashambadzi: The Coast Walkers," *Radical History Review* 144, 2022: 173-203.

Alumnus **Brett Shadle** (2000) published two articles: "The 'Problem' of the Urban Refugee: The African Refugee Regime and the Joint Refugee Services of Kenya (1967-1982)," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (2021), and "The Unity of Black People and the Redemption of Ethiopia: The Ethiopian World Federation and a New Black Nationalism, 1936-1941," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 54 (2021): 193-215. He also has a chapter, "Humiliation and

Violence in Kenyan History," in *Gender, Violence, and Affect: Interpersonal, Institutional and Ideological Practices*, edited by M. Hussoet et al (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2021), 203-220. He is currently the chair of the Department of History at Virginia Tech.

Alumnus **Ariel Zellman** (2013) coauthored "Uneasy Lies the Crown: External Threats to Religious Legitimacy and Interstate Dispute Militarization," *Security Studies* 31(1), 2022: 152-182; and "With Friends Like These: Does American Soft Power Advance International Religious Freedom?," *Religions* 13(6), 2022: 502, DOI: 10.3390/rel13060502.

### Caroline Bledsoe honored at American Anthropological Association meeting



A virtual session honoring the work of Caroline Bledsoe, Professor Emerita of Anthropology and the Melville J. Herskovits Professor of African Studies at Northwestern University was held at the 2022 American Anthropological Association's annual meeting. Participants highlighted Bledsoe's insistence that students and scholars in anthropology and demography interrogate their assumptions about social categories and processes. Her career spans almost four decades and focuses on kinship, reproduction, migration, the life course, and time itself in West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia) and its diaspora. Among the participants were former Northwestern colleagues, William Murphy and Helen Schwartzman, and students, Chelsie Yount-André (2000), who organized the session, Amal Hassan Fadlalla (2000), Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (formerly Johnson-Kuhn, 2000), and Arturo Marquez Jr. (2019).



## Chasing the ball exhibit at Herskovits Library

By Lugardis Ineza Ukangutse

“Chasing the Ball” was this Fall’s exhibition at the Melville J. Herskovits Library, curated by Northwestern University Presidential Fellow and History PhD candidate Bright Gyamfi under the direction of Esmeralda Kale. Inspired by the World Cup, a historic and joyful event that brought people together to celebrate their national identities, it examined three major themes: citizenship, racism, and national unity.

Many European teams include “minority” players, but racism is ingrained throughout football. Economically disadvantaged individuals are marginalized in nations where the World Cup is hosted, and their neighborhoods are ravaged to accommodate international spectators. Despite these harrowing experiences, football players (such as Didier Drogba) have utilized the game to counter civil conflicts, bring disparate ethnic groups together, and contribute financially to their communities.

In December 2022, I interviewed Bright Gyamfi to learn more about his interest in football, the World Cup, and how that interest informed one of the Herskovits’ best exhibitions. Bright’s favorite aspect of the exhibition is the memories it conjures. He explained that curating the exhibition was like reliving his best childhood memory. He remembered exactly where he was, who he was with, and what he was doing in 2010 when

Ghana nearly got to the FIFA World Cup semifinals. He recalled the euphoria that swept the African continent when an African country—South Africa— hosted the World Cup for the first time in history. Bright remembered how close his native nation, Ghana, came to making FIFA history as he looked at the exhibition, the “Jabulani” ball on display, and the books on the shelves.

As a child, Bright played football and became aware of its great influence in several African countries. He remembers how Ivorian footballer Didier Drogba stopped the five-year civil war. According to one account, Ivory Coast was in the midst of a five-year civil war when Didier Drogba’s team defeated Sudan, while Cameroon and Egypt drew 1-1. That earned Ivory Coast a World Cup berth, and as the Ivorian players celebrated, Drogba fell on his knees and implored the rebels to end the conflict. According to the story, the rebels heeded Drogba’s appeal.

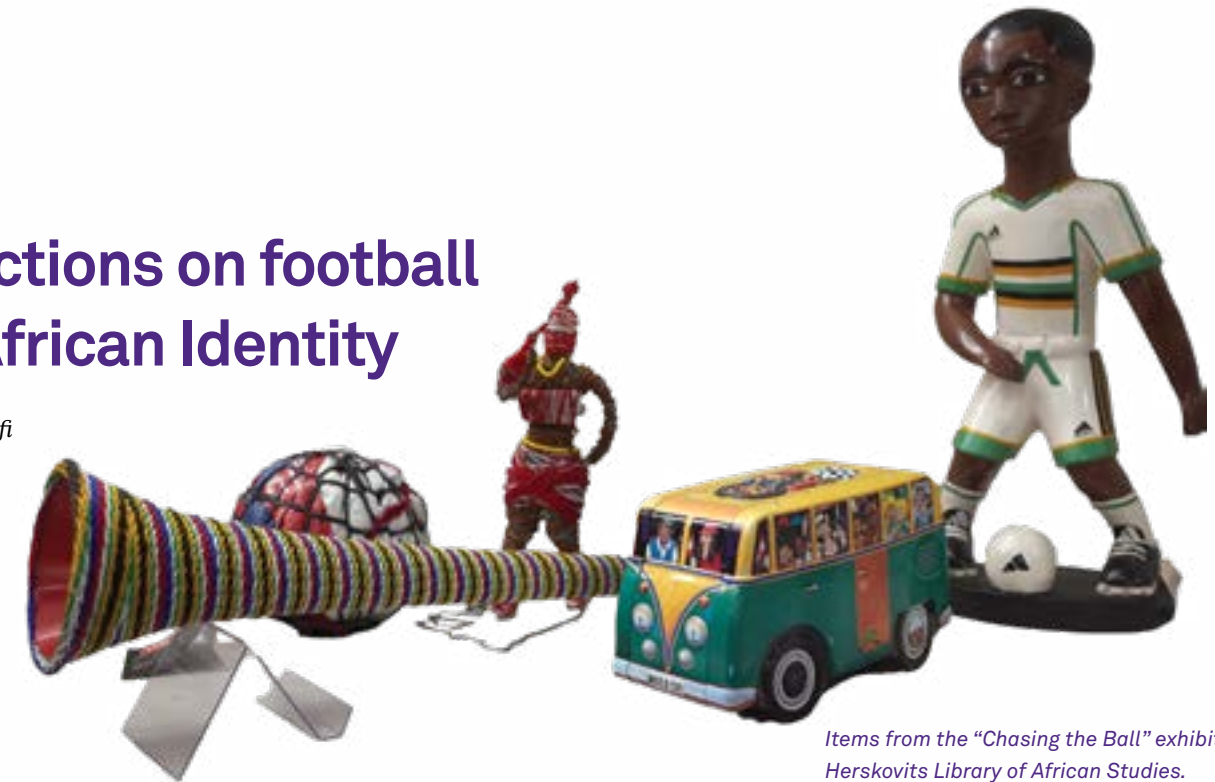
Bright stressed the power of optimism instilled in many African countries as they support the few African football teams representing them in the World Cup, despite obvious shortcomings. On the other hand, Bright noted the negative aspects of football. In 2021, he was in the United Kingdom when he observed a teenage Black football player being abused on the football field for missing a penalty. Harsh phrases such as “You should return to your country” and “You are useless” were used. Such bigotry also occurred in Germany.

The exhibition title “Chasing the Ball” refers to the journey of countries, continents, and individuals chasing different dreams through football history. Kids worldwide make footballs from whatever materials are available and play football in the street, hoping that one day they may be the next Didier Drogba or take their countries far in the World Cup. The Herskovits library has a collection of books that explore the aforementioned themes of the exhibition in detail. These books and the exhibition invite more conversation about controversial topics about the World Cup, including the corrupt nature of FIFA, the controversy about Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup, and many other relevant, intriguing discussion topics.

Lugardis Ineza Ukangutse is a junior at Northwestern.

## Reflections on football and African Identity

By Bright Gyamfi



Items from the “Chasing the Ball” exhibit at the Herskovits Library of African Studies.

The year 2010 was no ordinary year. It was the first time an African country hosted the World Cup and the first time Ghana had made it to the quarterfinals, joining Cameroon (1990) and Senegal (2002) as the only African countries to achieve such a historic feat. As a Ghanaian, I will continue to carry this moment with me for the rest of my life. Like most young Ghanaians, I wanted to become a football player. As a little boy, all my role models were football players, from Didier Drogba to Stephen “Tornado” Appiah. After school, I would rush to my room to change and play football with my friends in my neighborhood. We turned everything we found, from oranges to bowls, into a football. Football was our life. Football was our expressive language. Thunder or lightning, nothing would stop us from playing because football was the oxygen we breathed. Football taught us sportsmanship, leadership, trust, and persistence. These characteristics would later inform my academic journey. As a historian and a football lover, working with the team at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies to curate an exhibition for the World Cup was a dream come true. The exhibition “Chasing the Ball” explores the contradicting themes in the world of football such as citizenship, racism, human rights, corruption, and national unity.

The World Cup is a momentous and joyful event that brings people together to celebrate their national identities. Before the World Cup, many countries try to persuade players with dual citizenship to play in the country of their birth

or that of their parent(s). This can lead brothers, to sometimes play for different nations. At the same time, the World Cup reminds us of who belongs to the nation-state and who can make claims to citizenship. For some “minority” players in Europe, if they propel their teams to victory, they are embraced, but their citizenship status may be challenged if their teams lose. Consequently, racism emerges in football. For example, the three young Black British players—Bukayo Saka, Marcus Rashford, and Jadon Sancho— were racially abused after they missed penalties in the Euro finals in 2020. In some countries hosting the World Cup, stadiums have been built with cheap labor and minimum concern for better working conditions. Some have argued that the money for the stadiums could be used for other long-term development projects. Moreover, economically disadvantaged people are further marginalized and have their communities destroyed to accommodate foreign attendees as well as high-tech large capacity stadiums. Furthermore, recent evidence of massive and ubiquitous corruption within the FIFA organization has increased the demand for transparency, specifically in the selection process. Despite these problems and concerns, players have used football to stop civil wars, unite diverse ethnic groups, and contribute financially to their communities.

Bright Gyamfi is a final year history graduate student and Presidential Fellow at Northwestern.





## Herskovits Library acquires new artist's books

By Esmeralda M. Kale, George & Mary LeCron Foster Curator of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies

Recently the Herskovits Library added four absolutely exquisite artist books to its collections. Each book is beautifully created and encourages the user to explore the topics raised in several different ways while exploring the artists' artistic decisions.



*Mare Nostrum* (2022) by artist Islam Aly is a bilingual book in English and Arabic that evocatively documents the Mediterranean immigration crisis, the migrant journey so many make from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa across the Mediterranean in search of a better life.

*Inception* (2019) by Islam Aly is inspired by stories and journeys of the immigrants and refugees. Written in English and Arabic, the book is based on the twelfth-century Persian verse poem "The Conference of the Birds" by Farid Aldin Al-Attar. The poem explores the search for truth and integrity, which parallels the immigrants and refugee's quest to rediscover themselves.



*Cryptic Magic* (2017) by Islam Aly is an investigation into Ethiopian symbols. Aly presents a vocabulary of signs and symbols to connect the physical and the emotional. Different symbols are laser cut on each page; their overlapping and intersection generate new meanings. The magnets imbedded in the covers and the accordion structure of the book allows the user to interact with the book, creating different connections between the symbols while compressing or extending the structure for a more sculptural appearance.

Carolyn Shattuck's book, *Save the Rhino* (2020), touches on the poaching of Rhinos to near extinction. Rhino poaching is a critical issue in Africa because of the high demand for rhino horns, which are trafficked in Asia and other places where it is believed to symbolize wealth or have healing qualities. No evidence of such healing traits exists. Throughout Africa rigorous plans are in place to stop poachers as their population diminishes.



## Swahili Corner



### Learning Swahili for the real world

By Gabriel West

I am in my second year of Swahili and my third year at Northwestern. I postponed taking a language course due to covid, but enrolling in Swahili at Northwestern was easy. There are very few places to learn African languages, so it was a chance I could not pass up. As a Black student, it was a unique opportunity to expand my horizons and appreciate Africa and East Africa.

The instruction has focused on real-world applications of Swahili, and each quarter I gain new skills and an appreciation for East African culture. Skills like shopping at the market and telling time give me insight into how the culture is different and how it integrates with the language. I enjoy the

weekly language tables, where we eat samosas and drink chai after practicing our language skills. Personally, the multicultural show last spring was my favorite activity. We got to watch dances, listen to poetry, and hear music from cultures around the world. We also got to dance to Swahili music for the crowd. I hope to travel to Arusha to attend the international Swahili student conference this upcoming year.

Beyond that, I plan to travel to East Africa, hopefully, multiple times throughout my life, to experience the cultural richness and natural beauty the countries of the East African Community have to offer. The language's status as an ever-growing regional lingua franca will provide endless opportunities.

Gabriel West is a junior at Northwestern.

### My experience at the mid-year Fulbright Foreign Language Assistants conference

By Faith Jebet

On November 11, all roads led to Washington, DC, for this year's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTA) from different parts of the globe. More than a hundred FLTAs gathered for the four-day mid-year Fulbright conference. We gained an eye-opening experience from the workshops on professional development, especially those related to the methodologies of teaching a foreign language effectively. We also exchanged ideas based on our different backgrounds, beliefs, and values. This provided an excellent opportunity to build a strong network with teachers worldwide.

The conference theme was "Connecting People, Connecting Nations." We discussed our experiences in the United States, including our challenges and successes in our day-to-day lives in our host institutions. Representatives from the US Department of State and the Institute of International Education (IIE) ensured the conference's success. They stressed the importance of cultural diversity and

how Fulbright connects nations through foreign language teaching. Aside from talks by several professors, some Fulbrighters also shared their knowledge, ideas, and skills in teaching a foreign language effectively. The highlight of the conference was a cultural fair. We felt the world's words at our fingertips. Each booth displayed a country's culture. We all wore our traditional attire, exchanged gifts, and learned about new cultures, traditions, and customs.

During the conference, we had the chance to visit attractions in the DC area, including the Museum of Natural History, the Capitol Hill area, the Abraham Lincoln monument, and the White House, which gave us insight into the history and culture of the US. The conference concluded with a lunch with all the FLTAs and Fulbright representatives and advisors, followed by closing remarks from one of the Fulbright officials. We left the conference ready to share the ideas we gained from the conference. I personally had the best experience at the Fulbright conference.

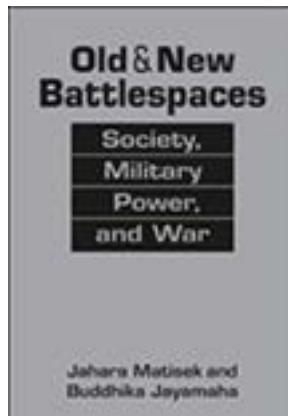
Faith Jebet is an FLTA in Northwestern's Swahili program.

## PAS bookshelf



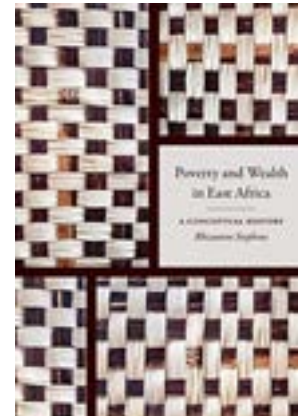
***Rethinking Civil Military Relations in Africa: Beyond the Coup D'etat***  
(Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022).

Political science alumni **Moses Khisa** (2016) and **Christopher Day** (2012) have coedited and contributed to this collection of studies that explore the nature and significance of evolving relationships between political authority, military power, and society. Civil-military relations across the continent have changed dramatically since the first military coups in the 1960s. The contributors address how useful conventional models are for understanding civil-military relations in the African context. Contributors include several other alumni and their mentor William Reno. Erin Damman (2012) coauthors two chapters, “The African Union and the “Good Coup” and “Beyond the Coup d’Etat?.” Jahara Matissek (2018) focuses on “Military Effectiveness: The African Alternative,” and coauthors with William Reno a chapter “African Militaries and Contemporary Warfare.”



***Old & New Battlespaces: Society, Military Power, and War***  
(Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 2022)

In this groundbreaking book, political science alumni **Jahara (Franky) Matissek** (2018) and **Buddhika Jayamaha** (2019) address changing war domains, especially the cybersphere, civil society, and outer space. They interrogate urgent questions about the strategic challenges faced by Western states. They analyze the emergent real-world struggles and warn against believing that better weapons alone will protect us, warning that warfare has dramatically transformed, is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, and almost anything can be weaponized.



***Poverty and Wealth in East Africa: A Conceptual History***  
(Duke University Press, 2022)

Alumna **Rhiannon Stephens** (2007) presents a conceptual history of how people living in eastern Uganda have sustained and changed their thinking about wealth and poverty over the past two thousand years. This history shows that colonialism and capitalism did not introduce economic thought to this region and demonstrates that even in contexts of relative material equality between households, people invested intellectual energy in creating new ways to talk about the poor and the rich. Using an interdisciplinary approach to writing this history, she shows how the methods of comparative historical linguistics, archaeology, climate science, oral traditions, and ethnography can elucidate the past where few written historical records do not exist. Stephens challenges much of the received wisdom about the nature and existence of economic and social inequality in the region's deeper past.

## Northwestern

Program of African Studies  
620 Library Place  
Evanston, Illinois 60208-4110 USA  
Phone 847-491-7323  
Fax 847-491-3739  
african-studies@northwestern.edu  
northwestern.edu/african-studies

Chris Abani, *PAS Director*  
Meagan Keefe, *PAS Associate Director*  
Zekeria Ahmed Salem, *ISITA Director*  
Rebecca Shereikis, *ISITA Associate Director*  
Kelly Coffey, *Business Administrator*  
LaRay Denzer, *Newsletter Editor*  
Kathirine Leggette, *Program Assistant*