

Message from interim PAS director Wendy Griswold



While it has been a challenge to fill the shoes of departing Program of African Studies director Rachel Riedl, we've continued to move in the direction she was heading, even as we set out for some new horizons.

Many PAS activities continue to be organized around three research clusters: Health

and Healing; Environment, Security, and Development; and Avant-Garde Africa. Faculty and students in each cluster pursue individual and sometimes collaborative research in the broad areas they cover; the clusters also serve as the bases for grant proposals and other development activities. Each cluster also contributes to general programming, enabling the various and far-flung members of our community to know what others are doing.

Last fall the Health and Healing cluster, led by Adia Benton (anthropology), and the Avant-Garde Africa cluster, led by Soyini Madison (performance studies) with assistance from Sean Hanretta (history), held open meetings at PAS's Wednesday noon seminars. Representing the Environment, Security, and Development cluster, Will Reno (political science) presented his work on "A Theory of Violence in Contemporary Civil Wars." That same cluster, led by Chris Udry (economics), is a bridge to Northwestern's Global Poverty Research Lab, which works in Ghana and elsewhere in the developing world.

Our fall events also included notable speakers from outside Northwestern. Kwasi Konadu (Colgate University) spoke on "Communographies: New Histories of Culture, Community, Nationalism, and Decolonization in

Ghana/Africa/World." The Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA), which continues to flourish under director Zekeria Ahmed Salem (political science), brought Susana Molins-Lliteras (University of Cape Town) to campus to speak on "Iconic Archive: Timbuktu and Its Manuscripts in Public Discourse."

At an institution as long established as PAS, now in its 72nd year, much of what takes place is business as usual. Postdocs and visiting scholars flow through 620 Library Place. Afrisem, coordinated by Ahmed Salem and students Patrick Owuor (anthropology) and Omoyemi Aijsebutu (comparative literary studies), carries on as a biweekly venue for presenting dissertation research, and its annual spring conference is in the works. Undergraduates routinely choose from dozens of African studies electives offered through PAS. Our ties to the Herskovits Library and the Block Museum of Art grow ever stronger: Herskovits curator Esmeralda Kale is now a PAS steering committee member, as is the Block's associate director of curatorial affairs, Kathleen Berzock.

We also launched new initiatives. Of these, the most exciting is the creation of a formal partnership between Northwestern and the University of Ghana, Legon. Individual research collaborations involving both schools have thrived for years, yet no official university-to-university partnership was ever created. When I visited the University of Ghana in September, I met with faculty, museum curators, and with Andrew Anthony Adjei of the Vice Chancellor's Office, who gave an enthusiastic go-ahead to forming a partnership. The next month the University of Ghana's pro-vice chancellor for research and development came to Evanston to meet with Northwestern's vice president for international relations; they drew up a memorandum of understanding. With final approval of the memorandum expected soon, the two universities will start planning and fundraising for new programs in mentoring, archival coordination, scholarly exchanges, and the professional development of junior faculty and museum curators. Stay tuned!

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Conference expands ideas on Islam in global Africa

by Rebecca Shereikis

“Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Worlds,” the conference convened at Harvard University by the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa and Harvard Divinity School last September, featured scholarly panels on topics spanning time periods, continents, and disciplines, as well as a musical performance by Baraka Boys. The conference expanded on conversations begun at Northwestern at the 2018 ISITA conference “Islam in Global Africa.”

Panels addressed three primary themes: the long presence of African Muslims in the Americas, transnational Islam, and emerging paradigms in the study of Islam in Africa. ISITA director Zekeria Ahmed Salem set the stage with a keynote lecture on “Global Shinqit” that highlighted the influence of Mauritanian Islamic scholars such as Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayah, now based in the United Arab Emirates, on the constitution of religious authority in the Muslim world.

At the panel on African Muslims in the Americas, Ayodeji Ogunnaiké (Bowdoin College) argued that up until the early 20th century, West African Muslims in Brazil were able to recreate Islamic communities and intellectual traditions while maintaining ties to their homeland. Diego Giovanni Castellanos (National University of Colombia) focused on how a group of Afro-Colombian converts to Islam in the 1960s used Islamic beliefs and practices to strengthen Afro-descendant ethnic identity amid social exclusion. Exploring the microhistories of Muslims traveling between the Middle Niger and Jamaica from 1790 to 1854, Madina Thiam (University of California, Los Angeles) demonstrated how the travelers leveraged their Islamic backgrounds to negotiate spaces of autonomy and self-determination.

Panels on transnational Islam highlighted the survival strategies of far-flung African Muslim diaspora communities. Panelist Irit Bak (University of Tel Aviv) discussed the African Muslims in Jerusalem who used Sufi affiliation to create community networks and support West African pilgrims to Mecca during the colonial era. Steve Howard (Ohio University) discussed the efforts of Sudan’s Republican Brothers and Sisters—dispersed to the Gulf States and the

US following the 1985 execution of the movement’s founder, Mahmoud Taha—to sustain the movement’s discipline and commitment to social justice in the contexts of extremist Gulf politics and the “moral ambiguity” of the US. Cheikh Niang (Université Cheikh Anta Diop) examined the evolving sociopolitical perspectives of the Niassene branch of the Senegalese Tijaniyya Sufi order as it becomes increasingly globalized. Youssef Carter (Harvard University) explored how another Senegalese Sufi order—the Mustafawi—has gained a following among African American converts to Islam for whom West African Sufi ethics function as a philosophy of liberation and healing from trauma.

Other papers examined the tension that arises between Islamic ethics of racial egalitarianism and European-derived racial hierarchies when non-African Muslims intervene in Muslim Africa. Taking the international nongovernmental organization Islamic Relief and its HIV-AIDS prevention efforts in South Africa as a case study, Rhea Rahman (Brooklyn College) argued that while the ideological logic of global white supremacy shaped Islamic Relief’s interventions, South African Muslim activists were able to counter racialized assumptions at the grassroots level. Similarly, Ezgi Guner (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) pointed to the “white savior complex” underlying the pedagogical practices of Turkish schools in Africa, which marginalize Muslim African religious interpretations, practices, and institutions and place Ottoman-Turkish tradition at the center of Islamic civilization.

Two papers on Shi’i Islam revealed the interplay of local, national, and transnational actors in shaping Shi’i social welfare provision and constituting Shi’i communities in Africa. Mara Leichtmann (Michigan State University) argued that Iranian influence in East African Shi’ism has been overstated; instead, East African Shi’a have their own local Islamic histories, a variety of transnational ties, independent reasons for adhering to their faith, and freedom to choose which *marja’* (supreme religious authority) to follow. Gadija Ahjum (University of Cape Town) contended that as Cape Town’s Shi’i community has grown over the past three

decades, a distinctly localized South African Shi'ism has emerged. Amidu Sanni (Fountain University, Nigeria) suggested that further exploration of sources in *Ajami* (African languages written in Arabic script) will yield insights into the creative tension between the local and the global in the production of Islamic knowledge in Africa.

The final panel addressed new paradigms in the study of Islam in Africa. Zachary Wright (Northwestern University in Qatar) considered two texts central to the Tijaniyya Sufi order in North and West Africa since the 18th century and argued that African Muslim societies' complex understandings of metaphysics deserve more study. Oludamini Ogunnaike (University of Virginia) highlighted the intertextual creativity of West African *madih* poetry in praise of the Prophet, a body of work reflecting adaptations and changes made by successive generations of readers. Samiha Rahman

(University of Pennsylvania) considered how young African American Muslims in Senegal's Medina Baye, the spiritual capital of the Niassene Tijaniyya, experience the gift-giving economy at the heart of the Islamic education they receive there. Felicitas Becker (Ghent University) concluded the panel with a reflection on Swahili-language sermons by Muslim preachers in East Africa who position their reformist projects in relation to the notion of *maendeleo* (progress/development).

"Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Worlds" was cosponsored by ISITA and Harvard University's Alwaleed Professorship of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society. The conference steering committee was led by ISITA director Zekeria Ahmed Salem and Harvard Divinity School professor Ousmane Kane.

Baraka Boys embody African Muslim identities in global contexts

The "Africa, Globalization, and the Muslim Worlds" conference featured Baraka Boys, a UK-based network of young Muslim artists and public intellectuals with spiritual linkages to West African Islamic scholars. Members include Kahlid Siddiq, whose music videos regularly get more than three million views online. In addition to performing at the conference, Siddiq and several fellow Baraka Boys shared their personal stories as western Muslims who revived their religious identities through engagement with Africa. Their contributions—whether in discussion or performance—enriched the conference at multiple levels. The scholars in attendance could not help swaying to the Boys' instrumentalized UK-Jamaican rendition of a 13th-century North African poem, for instance; those same scholars later pressed the Boys about the gender specificity of their name. Boys Mustafa Briggs and Mohamed Yahya joined the discussion, affirming the accessibility of academic research on Islamic Africa. Discussion leader Zachary Wright (Northwestern University in Qatar) framed the conversation as an invocation of "Afropolitan Islam," citing Simon Gikandi's reading of Achille Mbembe's

concept of Afropolitanism: "To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity—to be of Africa and other worlds at the same time."



ISITA director Zekeria Ahmed Salem (center, in blue jacket) with members of Baraka Boys

Northwestern Africanists participate in annual African studies meeting

“Being, Belonging and Becoming in Africa” was the theme of last November’s annual meeting of the African Studies Association, which drew participants to Boston to examine what distinguishes “Africa” and “Africans” from other places and peoples in a world preoccupied with tensions over localism, nationalism, and globalism. Several Northwestern faculty, graduate students, and alumni took active roles.

Three faculty members participated in roundtables: Aldon Morris (sociology and African American studies) in “Transforming Ivory Towers to Ebony Towers: Lessons for South Africa’s Curriculum Transformation in the Humanities from Africa and African-American Studies”; Will Reno (political science) in “The Changing Face of Civil Military Relations in Africa”; and Zekeria Ahmed Salem (political science and ISITA director) in “Architectural Histories of Entanglement.” Ahmed Salem also took part in a panel on the book *Work, Social Status, and Gender in Post-Slavery Mauritania*.

Other faculty participants included Wendell Marsh (history and Buffett Institute postdoctoral fellow), who presented the paper “Coloniality in Shaykh Musa Kamara’s Arabic-Language Texts,” and Evan Mwangi (English), who cochaired the Program Committee Section on Literature.

Faculty and students based at Northwestern University in Qatar organized the panel “African Identities in the Arab Gulf Region,” chaired by alumnus Zachary Wright and featuring Wright’s paper “West African Islamic Scholarship in the Arab Gulf: Maliki Legalism and Sufism in Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia,” among others.

Graduate students presenting papers included William FitzSimons (history), “Power without a Center: Age-Sets, Ritual Confederacies, and the Construction of Ateker Political Communities in the Grasslands of East Africa, c. 900–1800 CE”; Caitlin Monroe (history), “Teaching Womanhood: Storytelling and Girls’ Education in Western Uganda”; and Susanna Sacks (English), “The Places of Protest: Theatrical and Digital Representations of South Africa’s Fallist Movement.” Marcos Abreu Leitão de Almeida (history) participated in the

roundtable “Joseph C. Miller Dialogues Part II: The Problem of Slavery: Strategies of Slaving in African and Atlantic History.”

PAS alumni presenting papers included David Donkor (Texas A&M University), “Shalai Tue: Sex, Alcohol, and the Performance of Sino-African Relations in a Ghanaian TV Ad”; Lynn Thomas (University of Washington, Seattle), “Emotions and Commodities in Transnational Circuits”; and Aili Tripp (University of Wisconsin–Madison), “Living without Domestic Violence: The Case of Western Sahara.” Nathalie Etoke (CUNY) participated in a panel on the book *The Economies of Queer Inclusion: Transnational Organizing for LGBTI Rights in Uganda*, and Cyril Obi (African Peace Building Network, Social Science Research Council) cochaired the panel “Discourses That Make or Mar: Engaging History, Identity, and the Narratives of Violence and African Peacebuilding.”

Alumni participating in roundtables included Jean Allman (Washington University in St. Louis) in “Anti-Blackness across the Atlantic,” “Mentorship in African Studies,” and “Surveying African Studies and (Re)Naming the Best Book (Herskovits) Prize?”; Nana Akua Anyidoho (University of Ghana) and Ibrahim Sundiata (Brandeis University) in “African Studies in a Multipolar World”; Eric Damman (University of Idaho), Christopher Day (College of Charleston), and Moses Khisa (North Carolina State College) in “The Changing Face of Civil Military Relations in Africa”; Krista Johnson (Howard University) in “Transforming Ivory Towers to Ebony Towers: Lessons for South Africa’s Curriculum Transformation in the Humanities from Africa and African American Studies”; Gregory Mann (Columbia University) in “Working Effectively with Journals”; Cyril Obi (SSRC) in “Discourses That Make or Mar: Engaging History, Identity, and the Narratives of Violence and African Peacebuilding”; and Lorelle Semley (College of the Holy Cross) and Ben Soares (University of Florida) in “Pitch That Article: Part II.”

Reflections on Northwestern YALI

*The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) was launched by former US President Barack Obama as a signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders. Every summer since 2013, Northwestern has hosted a cohort of YALI's Mandela Washington Fellows—25 African leaders aged 25–35 who are competitively selected to receive intensive professional development in the United States. Northwestern's summer 2019 cohort included **Alain Irankunda**, who founded a sign language training company in his native Burundi. Following are his reflections on his YALI experience.*

Being a part of the Northwestern community has been life-changing in many ways. By learning about the Business Model Canvas in Gabriel Vehovsky's class at the Kellogg School of Management's Global Hub, I changed my outlook on business. I learned how successful businesses solve problems. Outside of class I was able to use my knowledge by mentoring high school students who were learning entrepreneurial skills at the Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U.) organization in Evanston. (I am proud that the group I mentored won the pitch competition.)

I enjoyed networking opportunities with other fellows in my cohort—especially Kudzai Kutukwa from Zimbabwe, who challenged me to expand the scope of my business model. Because of him, I changed my company's name from Twese Twige (meaning “let us all learn” in the Kirundi language) to Continental Plus to suggest that the scope of my work could go beyond Burundi.

I also interacted with fellows from different institutions. In particular, I am grateful I met Sarah Adole, a fellow from Nigeria who was placed at Bridgewater State University; she saw the need for sign language skills in her work at the National Headquarters of the Nigerian Prison Service and encouraged everyone there to get training, including herself. I am also grateful to Herve Iradukunda, a Burundian American whose father is Burundi's ambassador in Nigeria; at the Mandela Washington Fellows summit meeting in Washington, DC, I explained what my company does, and he entrusted me with a project to provide internet access to thousands of young people in rural Burundi.



Alain Irankunda presents a certificate to a graduate of his center's English-language course.

Because Burundi has suffered two decades of civil conflict, the country's progress in providing education and social services for deaf children and their families has been severely impeded. There are an estimated 200,000 hearing-impaired people in Burundi, but only two institutions—both faith-based—provide education for deaf children, and this is limited to primary education. Children are often turned away for lack of space. The Ministry of Education makes no provision for the advanced education of deaf children, because they are classified as “vulnerable” and therefore come under the aegis of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights, and Gender.

When Burundi became a member of the East African Community in 2009—joining Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—job opportunities for Burundians expanded beyond their national borders; however, since most EAC countries are English-speaking, the acquisition of English language skills is necessary to enable Burundians—including the deaf and hearing-impaired—to compete in the marketplace in the EAC region.

The training and networking opportunities I received at Northwestern will help me in my work to establish a new sign language training center in Burundi that also offers English language training. I hope to help more hearing-impaired people in Burundi gain access to education as well as job opportunities.

Access to Health Project uses technology to improve community health education in Lagos

by Alexandra M. Tarzikhan



The Northwestern Access to Health Project—part of the Center for International Human Rights at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and the Institute for Global Health at the Feinberg School of Medicine—brings law, public health, medical, and busi-

ness faculty and graduate students together with communities, health advocates, government and university institutions, and human rights organizations in developing countries throughout the world.

Since early 2016, ATH has been involved in a community health education project in collaboration with the Justice and Empowerment Initiative Nigeria (JEI), a civil society organization working in Nigerian urban informal settlements, and the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation, a network of community-led groups working toward inclusive urban planning and governance in Lagos, Port Harcourt, and other Nigerian cities.

Over 67 percent of Lagosians live in informal settlements that lack basic public services such as sewage, water, trash collection, roads, and electricity. Without health clinics or access to emergency services, settlement residents

are subject to adverse health conditions. Many do not use government health services due to low rates of health literacy, distrust and miscommunication between local health centers and the communities they serve, discrimination by service providers, and lack of accountability around government funding.

In response, ATH, JEI, and the federation collaboratively developed a health literacy and access project aimed at improving health outcomes for Lagos’s poor and marginalized communities. The project has so far yielded a teacher-training curriculum for community-based health educators (CHEs) in Lagos that offers strategies for adult education, mobilization, and community-motivated behavior-change



models. Currently, there are 32 active CHEs in Nigeria serving 112 communities of 1,000 to 30,000 people. Simultaneously, the project mapped health center and hospital access for partner communities, using information provided directly by the health centers to ensure accountability.

To expand the project's reach and improve community health education, ATH recently partnered with consulting firm Slalom to design a website and mobile app that would increase access to health information and bring transparency to services. The website would provide up-to-date visual training materials to CHEs through a scalable, user-friendly medium, while the app would allow even the most remote populations to have access to a full public health curriculum.

Last September, I accompanied the Slalom team on a trip to Lagos to train a new cohort of CHEs, field test the mobile app, and pilot the website. We found that the app's visual information supplemented the education sessions, making the talks more interactive. Community members requested additional modules on diabetes, cancer, and nutrition and also asked for SMS recaps of the information presented. Depending on capacity, we hope to collect user data and feedback that will allow us to identify additional needs. We also hope to scale the web/mobile platform to other ATH locations and the broader Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation community.

Alexandra M. Tarzikhan is the Schuette Clinical Fellow in Health and Human Rights at the Center for International Human Rights, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. Founded in 2011 by law faculty member and PAS affiliate Juliet Sorensen and Feinberg faculty member Shannon Galvin, Access to Health encourages Northwestern graduate students to engage in global health issues by working directly with communities and local nongovernmental organizations.



Access to Health representatives and tech consultants from the firm Slalom traveled to Lagos last fall.

Opposite page: A Lagos-based senior community health educator (top) and community leaders at Igbologun settlement (bottom) are now using the mobile app codeveloped by Access to Health.

Panofsky Awardees pursue predissertation research in Africa

Chernoh M. Alpha Bah (history) undertook research at the University of Liverpool (UK) and the Sierra Leone National Archives in Freetown for his project on the relationship between public health, prison labor, and the revenue crisis in colonial Sierra Leone from 1914 to 1944. Specifically, he used archival records at both sites to explore how the Alfred Jones Research Laboratory, Sierra Leone's first tropical medical research laboratory, conceived of "hard labor" as constitutive of good health and a preventive against disease.

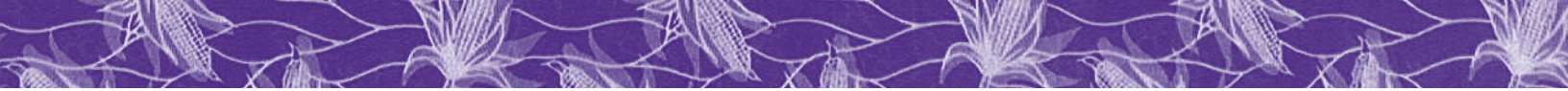
Raja Ben-Hammid (French and Italian) traveled to Tunisia to collect sources on the history of immigration from the former North African colonies (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) to Europe in general and to the French Métropole specifically. The archives of the National Library in Tunis held key information—including immigrant testimonies in French and Arabic—on the historical, economic, and political ramifications of immigration from North Africa to France and on the construction of the immigrant as "the other." She focused on how the Algerian immigrants who formed the political organization *Étoile nord-africaine* in the 1940s exemplified political engagement in both France and their homeland, eventually leading to Algerian independence.

Nora Scally Gavin-Smyth (plant biology and conservation) completed initial botanical fieldwork in Tanzania's Southern Uluguru Mountains—working with a local field botanist and the Nyandira village environmental committee chairman—for her dissertation research on the Phylogeography of the Eastern Arc *Impatiens* (Balsaminaceae). Laying the groundwork for ongoing fieldwork, she established partnerships with botanists at the University of Dar es Salaam and with staff at SEGA Girls' Secondary School in Morogoro, secured Tanzanian scientific and residency permits, Tanzanian export and US import permits, and a raft of permission letters.

Esther Ginestet (history) traveled to Kenya to do archival research at the Kenya National Archives and the National Museums of Kenya, consult oral literature material at the University of Nairobi Library, meet with community leaders and academics, and visit memorial sites and shrines in the Kisumu region, Siaya, and South Nyanza. She was able to begin sketching out a history of grandmotherhood and storytelling in Western Kenya and to reconstruct the biographies of Luo women novelists Asenath Odaga, Margaret Ogola, and Grace Ogot.

Bright Gyamfi (history) conducted archival research and oral interviews at the Dakar-based African Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Senegal and at the University of Ghana. He was looking at the evolution of IDEP's aims and research orientation—how they shifted toward regional economic development and liberation struggles in southern Africa and how they were used to criticize unequal economic relations between the West and Africa. In Ghana he examined how Ghana-based scholars' transnational connections during the 1980s led to scholarship that emphasized regional cooperation rather than the Ghana-centric focus that prevailed between 1957 and 1966.

Patrick Mbullo Owuor (anthropology) based his research in Makueni, Kenya, focusing on how water infrastructure and management—and hydroelectric dams in particular—can reshape livelihoods, social networks and institutions, community power dynamics, and the economic landscape. He arrived in Makeuni during the resettlement of over 5,000 people displaced by dam construction and conducted in-depth informant interviews as well as focus groups.



Moussa Seck (French and Italian) went to Senegal to interview writer Boubacar Boris Diop, a key figure in his dissertation project on West African migrant communities in France. They discussed francophone literature, migration writings in West Africa, and issues of mobility and hospitality. In addition, he formed a relationship with the Dakar-based Center for Migration in West Africa that will allow him to participate in its data collection sessions in July and access information on the causes and routes of internal and external migration.

Mariam Taher (Middle East and North African Studies Program) spent two months in Siwa, an oasis in Egypt's Western Desert, where her fieldwork focused on how Siwi women's mobilities are structured across spatial, linguistic, cultural, and class-based scales. By observing how the women used language in everyday life and talked about their own language practices, she was able to discern systems of value built into the local linguistic framework.

PAS welcomes new graduate students

Alexandra (Sasha) Artamonova (art history) studies modern and contemporary African American and African Diaspora art and is especially interested in the Cold War-era artistic exchange between African American and African socialist artists and the Soviet Union. She received a specialist diploma in sociology from the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow) and a master's degree in North American studies from the John F. Kennedy Institute at Freie Universität (Berlin). Her thesis examined the history of visual representation of black romance in European and North American visual culture.

Melina Gooray (art history) is an arts educator and youth advocate who thrives in and supports Afrocentric feminist spaces. She has worked in various capacities at US cultural institutions, including the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters in Savannah, Georgia; the Art, Design, and Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Her master's thesis examined shifts in material practices in domestic vernacular architecture in Essequibo, Guyana, her parents' hometown. At Northwestern she will explore the pedagogical strategies of contemporary black female artists and art educators.

Emily Kamm (history) is a history doctoral student studying the 18th- and 19th-century Atlantic World. Her interests focus on transatlantic connections between West Central Africa and Latin America, with emphasis on environmental history and epistemologies of the natural world. She earned a bachelor's degree with honors in history at Portland State University and was most recently the program developer for a project to integrate domestic violence services into an Oregon Health Sciences University primary care clinic.

Ewurama Okai (sociology) is passionate about studying and representing previously marginalized voices in academia. Her interests include identity socialization, the deconstruction of blackness, the sociology of education, collective memory in higher education, and the construction of culture in law. She has a master's degree in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University.

Sreddy Yen (English) has research interests in contemporary African and Caribbean literatures, global modernisms, and queer studies.

A summer of dance at the Herskovits Library

by Gene Kannenberg, Jr.

Last summer the Herskovits Library presented two inter-related exhibits, *Dance across Africa: Through the Collections of the Herskovits Library* and *Katherine Dunham and Katherine Flowers: Herskovits's Influence in the Study of African Dance*. The displays coincided with "Dancing in Common," the 2019 Dance Studies Association annual conference held at Northwestern in August.

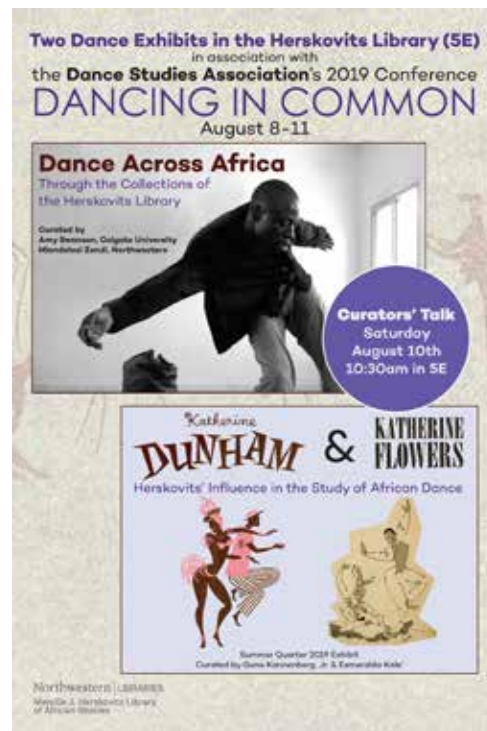
Months before the conference, performance studies graduate student Mlondolozzi Zondi decided to curate an exhibit showcasing how African dance has been practiced and promoted. Zondi and cocurator Amy Swanson, a theatre and drama graduate student, sifted through a variety of materials from the Africana collection, including dozens of folders stored in vertical files.

Eventually coming together as *Dance across Africa*, their exhibit was on display throughout the conference. Wide-ranging in geographical and historical scope, featuring travel brochures, research, dance company promotional materials, photographs, and more, it questioned the ways dance traditions from Africa have been exoticized, co-opted, and otherwise promoted to the rest of the world during the 20th and 21st centuries.

The exhibit also included large reproductions of work by Martinican-born photographer Élise Fitte-Duval, with whom Swanson had worked previously. Taken from the series *Danser l'Espoir* (Dancing Hope), the photographs cover the first two decades of the 21st century and were taken at various sites in Senegal, including cultural centers and the international dance institution École des Sables.

For the Herskovits summer-quarter exhibit, curator Esmeralda Kale featured the work of two popularizers of African influence on dance who each had ties to Northwestern. Uncovering materials related to these dance pioneers required several visits to University Archives.

Although never a Northwestern student, Katherine Dunham corresponded with Melville Herskovits at the beginning of her dance studies, and his personal papers held a remarkable record of their discussions and his continued interest in her performing career. Katherine Flowers later



studied with Herskovits and quite consciously built on Dunham's work through her own performance and teaching; her papers include a wealth of material concerning Dunham's work.

One half of the exhibit followed Dunham's career, which began with fieldwork on dance from Africa and led to Broadway and beyond, by including the correspondence with Herskovits as well as publicity materials that he and Flowers amassed. The other half focused on Flowers, showcasing promotional and educational materials from her career, including programs, essays, and choreography charts.

The exhibits attracted much positive attention, particularly from attendees to the conference, during which Kale, Swanson, and Zondi gave a well-attended curators' talk followed by a lively Q&A. Taken together, the exhibits publicized many rarely seen items from the collections and highlighted one of Melville J. Herskovits's more tangential but still significant contributions to the study of dance from Africa.



Etchings by Mohammad Omar Khalil from the book *Season of Migration to the North* (above) and drawings by Zoe Beloff from her book *Between Worlds: An Asylum Seeker in America* (right)



Timely additions to the Herskovits collection

by Esmeralda Kale

Migration, asylum, and refugees have been constants in the news for the last few years, and two recent acquisitions by the Herskovits Library offer visual reflections on the stories behind the headlines.

The first is an artist’s book consisting of 10 original etchings by Sudanese painter and printmaker Mohammad Omar Khalil. Its title, *Season of Migration to the North*, is an homage to Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih’s postcolonial Arabic novel of the same name. Khalil’s prints explore and depict scenes from Salih’s masterpiece, a tale of migration from South to North and the pain of return. The prints accompany a distinctive new edition of the Arabic novel, designed by Reza Abedini.

The second acquisition is *Between Worlds: An Asylum Seeker in America*, a 2018 book that New York-based artist and filmmaker Zoe Beloff created from her interviews with a Cameroonian refugee. Beloff explains that “*Between Worlds* is a documentary picture story that follows the journey of an asylum seeker in the United States. His story is both unique and representative of the millions uprooted by conflict throughout the world who are attempting to start a new life in America. Since filming his journey and incarceration in an immigration detention center was impossible, I decided to draw his experiences as he described them to me.”

Spotlight on the Claude Barnett Research Collection

by Florence Mugambi

The Herskovits Library's Claude Barnett Research Collection offers a window on 1950s–60s African affairs as reported by various international news services. African American journalist Claude Albert Barnett (1889–1967), who was founding director of the Associated Negro Press (ANP) news service on Chicago's South Side, assembled the collection, which comprises 41 boxes of news clippings, photographs, press releases, and newsletters.

Topics covered include African students in the United States and the Soviet Union, France's satellite-tracking stations in South Africa and Congo, and France's nuclear tests in Africa. In addition, there is extensive coverage of independence movements in Ghana and Kenya; the assassination attempts

on Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah; the land issue in Kenya; severance of diplomatic ties between Somalia and Britain due to the Northern Frontier District of Kenya; Katanga regional politics (see cartoon at right); and African education.

Among the press releases is an exclusive 1963 interview with 20 African students who left Bulgaria after the banning of their students' union. The students complained of persecution and violent assault, and one declared, "I shall never in my life visit Bulgaria or any communist country again." Another press release, from the American National Red Cross News Service, dated 1960, reported on five University of Pennsylvania physicians recruited to spend a month each as members of an International Red Cross

team treating 10,000 Moroccans who were paralyzed after eating food prepared with cooking oil mixed with oil used to flush jet planes engines.

Additionally, the collection includes photographs, primarily from Ghana but also from Nigeria and Liberia, with many identified by press



A scene from "The Boy Kumasenu". Nortey Engman (the Boy Kumasenu) is interviewed by Dr. Oku Ampofo before being sent to the Juvenile Court.



captions. Among them are photos of Nortey Ingam (shown at left), who played the lead role in Ghana's first feature film, *The Boy Kumasenu*. The film brought together a nonprofessional all-African cast and was nominated for a British Academy Film Award in 1953.

The Herskovits Library received the Claude Barnett Research Collection from the Chicago Historical Society in January 1980. Its contents had been separated from the Claude Albert Barnett Papers, 1919–1967, held by the Chicago Historical Society. The bulk of Barnett's papers and other ANP dispatches are located at the Chicago Historical Society and the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard University.

Swahili Corner



As a language enthusiast with interests in the economics of developing countries, I was excited to find out, during my first year at Northwestern, about the opportunity to learn Swahili here. I began taking classes last year as

a sophomore and was immediately drawn to the sound and logical structure of the language. Last summer PAS honored me with a Morris Goodman Award, which provided funding for two months of Swahili instruction at the State University of Zanzibar in Tanzania.

Arriving in Zanzibar alone was difficult at first. Since my trip was not part of a program with other American students, it was clear early on that I would need to form my own social connections. Most of the other foreigners were tourists

who had no interest in knowing more Swahili than “jambo” or “hakuna matata,” words never heard in colloquial Swahili. This attitude, along with other factors, created significant social barriers between the foreign and local populations. Thanks to the Swahili skills I learned at Northwestern and my dedication to learning more, I soon discovered I could reduce those barriers.

After opening up and putting in the effort, I found Zanzibar to be an ideal place for language learning. Greeting and interacting with strangers is a cultural norm, so it wasn't difficult to break the ice. Everyone I met was friendly and receptive to my Swahili-learning process. The close friends I made were always eager to help me practice my speaking and vocabulary, slipping in new slang whenever necessary. After eight weeks of discussing politics and culture with my Swahili professor, chatting with street vendors, and meeting people at communal dinner tables in the Darajani market, I was able to drastically improve my language skills and grow as a person.

I could not be more thankful for my language-learning experience in Zanzibar and at Northwestern, and I am excited to see the role that Swahili will play in my future.

—Desmond O'Shaughnessy (Weinberg '21)

Swahili class celebrates Kenyan athletes

Last October, students of visiting Fulbright instructor of Swahili Seline Okeno attended Chicago's annual Kenya Marathon Dinner, a chance for Chicago Marathon fans to socialize with elite Kenyan runners in advance of the big race. Of the 100 or so guests gathered for the dinner in a downtown Chicago hotel, most were local East Africans; even a few world-renowned Ethiopian marathoners—longtime rivals of the Kenyan runners—were on hand. In addition to practicing their Swahili conversation skills, the students sampled authentic East African dishes and performed a dance to “Taunet Nelel,” a popular song by Kenyan Gospel singer Emmy Kosgei. They also met Lawrence Cherono, the would-be winner of the 2019 Chicago Marathon.



Northwestern Swahili students attended a dinner honoring elite Kenyan runners in advance of last October's Chicago Marathon.



Community news

Chris Abani (English) gave the introductory reading at the Cave Canem Poetry Prize Reading at New York University's Lillian Vernon House in Brooklyn in December.

Zekeria Ahmed Salem (political science and ISITA director) presented the paper "African Studies in the US at a Critical Juncture" at the meeting of the European Network for Political and Social Analysis in Paris in October.

Galya Ben-Arieh (political science) wrote the chapter "Persecution, Prosecution, Protection: Doing International Justice for Sexual Violence" in *Transitional Justice and Forced Migration: Critical Perspectives from the Global South*, edited by Nergis Canefe (Cambridge University, 2019).

Huey Copeland (art history) and **Krista Thompson** (art history) are among Northwestern's coconveners of "The Black Arts Archive" Sawyer Seminars, a Mellon Foundation-funded series of transnational seminars and a summer institute during the 2020–21 academic year.

Bright Gyamfi (history graduate student) presented two papers at conferences last summer: "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Struggle to Decenter African Studies" at the Ghana Studies Association Third Triennial Conference and "From Nkrumah's Ghana to the African Diaspora: Ghanaian Intellectual Activists and the Development of Black Studies" at the Dakar Institute of African Studies

Fifth International Conference. The latter paper won the Ghana Studies Association's prize for best conference paper by an emerging scholar, which was awarded at the November African Studies Association meeting in Boston.

Katherine Hoffman (anthropology) presented the paper "Truth in Justice: Collective Oaths and Written Deeds as Evidence in Moroccan Amazigh (Berber) Customary Courts (1930–1956)" at the November meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Gene Kannenberg Jr. (Herskovits Library) gave the presentation "The Architecture of the Comics Page" and curated the exhibit *Comics (mostly aseptic and abstract-ish)* at the conference "Comicana: Comics and Graphic Novels across the Humanities," held at the University of Mississippi in October.

Dolores Koenig (PhD anthropology '77) presented the paper "Terroir and Climate Change: Changing Grain Production at Manantali, Mali" at the November meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Amanda Logan (anthropology) published the articles "Critically Engaging

African Food Security and Usable Pasts through Archaeology" and "Food Sovereignty in African Pasts Holds Lessons for African Futures" in *African Archaeological Review* 36(3) 2019.

Peter Mwangi (Swahili) presented the paper "Education and Development: The 21st-Century Realities" at the National Swahili Association of Kenya's meeting at Karatina University in Kenya last summer. In October he gave the presentation "Honing Global Citizenship Skills through Less-Commonly Taught Languages: STARTALK Language Program" at the 2019 AFS Global Conference in Montreal.

Sally Nuamah (PhD political science '16) joined the faculty of the School of Education and Social Policy in the fall. She coauthored the article "Who Governs? How Shifts in Political Power Shape Perceptions of Local Government Services," published in *Urban Affairs Review* last June.

Vanessa Watters Opalo (anthropology graduate student) presented the paper "Open to All: Negotiating Inclusion and Religious Difference in Togolese Finance" at the November meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Send your news updates to laray.denzer@northwestern.edu so that PAS can share word with the Africanist community at Northwestern and beyond.

Research funding opportunities for Northwestern students

Will Reno (political science) wrote the article “The Importance of Context When Comparing Civil Wars,” published online in the journal *Civil Wars* in November. During fall quarter he gave presentations on violence, warfare, and state collapse in Africa at the American University in Cairo, the University of Toronto, the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, and McGill University.

Lorelle Semley (PhD history '02), a professor of history and director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at College of the Holy Cross, was appointed to the editorial board of the journal *History in Africa*.

Noelle Sullivan (global health studies) gave the keynote address “Perverse Incentives and Commodified Health Care: Insights from the United States and Tanzania” at the “Health Systems and Health Care Organizations ‘in Crisis’—South to North” conference in Marseilles, France, in October. She coauthored the article “Hospital Side Hustles: Funding Conundrums and Perverse Incentives in Tanzania’s Publicly Funded Health Sector,” published in *Social Science & Medicine* in November.

African Research Leadership Awards of up to \$4,000 are granted for students 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 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 Chicago-area 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 course information, the syllabus, evaluations, etc. Applications 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, typically in the summer. 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 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: April 2.

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

Complete application instructions for all awards can be found on the PAS website. Questions? Please email african-studies@northwestern.edu or call 847-491-7323.

Events calendar

*Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at PAS, 620 Library Place, Evanston.
Check the PAS website—northwestern.edu/african-studies—for updates.*

JANUARY

13 noon–1 p.m.

“College Caravans: The Mauritanian Scholastic Tradition,” **Hamza Yusuf** (cofounder of Zaytuna College, Berkeley, California).
Lutkin Memorial Hall, 700 University Place, Evanston.

15 noon–1 p.m.

PAS town hall meeting.

22 noon–1 p.m.

Meeting of the **Avant-Garde Africa** research cluster.

29 noon–1 p.m.

“What’s in the Manuscripts of Timbuktu?” **Charles Stewart** (emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and ISITA).

FEBRUARY

5 noon–1 p.m.

“Effect of Beliefs and Gender Roles on Girls’ Math Education,” **Ashley Wong** (economics PhD student) and **Francesca Truffa** (economics PhD student).

12 noon–1 p.m.

“Suburban Islam: Religious and National Belonging in Chicago’s Exurbs,” **Justine Howe** (religious studies, Case Western Reserve University).

19 noon–1 p.m.

“Does Electricity Demobilize Citizens? Access to the Grid and Reduced Political Participation in Africa,” **Lauren MacLean** (political science, Indiana University Bloomington).

26 noon–1 p.m.

“Scientific Collaborations and Legal Accountability in Kenya,” **Denielle Elliot** (anthropology, York University).

MARCH

4 noon–1 p.m.

“Intellectual Networks and Islamic Realization and Sainthood in 18th-Century North Africa,” **Zachary Wright** (history and religious studies, Northwestern University in Qatar).

Northwestern

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