

Scholarly Conference  
November 14–16, 2024



New  
Directions  
in African Political Economy





**Under the leadership of**

Hoor Al Qasimi  
Salah M. Hassan

**Coordinated by**

Sataan Al-Hassan  
Grieve Chelwa  
Isra Mosameh

**Translation**

Mustafa Adam

**Logistics and Hospitality**

Amel Almulla  
Sara Majdi

**Marketing & Communications**

Naima Abdelwahed  
Aisha Al Hammadi  
Aya Ali  
Fatima Almarzooqi  
Megna Kalvani  
Ahmed Moustafa

**The Africa Institute Team**

Saif Alblooshi  
Jasem Alblooshi  
Aysha Abed Ali  
Mubarak Ali  
Amina Al Marzooqi  
Meera Almesmari  
Abdulrahman Alyafeai  
Asma Alyammahi  
Farida Alzarooni  
Reem Elbadawi  
Ramadan Elkhoully  
Intisar Ghandour  
Khalid Hussain  
Md Nurul Islam  
Ahmed Jasim  
Ahmad Kamalzada  
Adel Labidi  
Sherif Nour  
Moji Olaniyan  
Elamin Osman  
Fatima Rasheed  
Vijay Raj  
Abdulazeez Shamsheer  
Sreerenj Sudhakaran  
Lien Sulaiman

Scholarly Conference  
November 14–16, 2024

# New Directions in African Political Economy



*Global Studies University (GSU), established by Emiri decree in 2023, is a postgraduate institution in Sharjah dedicated to fostering critical thinkers through interdisciplinary research and education in global studies.*

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

**Foreword**



The Africa Institute, Global Studies University, Sharjah, is honored to host a three-day scholarly conference from November 14-16, 2024, in commemoration of the life and work of the late Professor Thandika Mkandawire. This conference, titled *New Directions in African Political Economy*, seeks to reflect on and celebrate the enduring significance of Mkandawire's scholarship for understanding African political economy today and in the future.

Over the course of the conference, more than 25 distinguished scholars, including colleagues and friends of Professor Mkandawire, as well as emerging voices in the field, will present their work. These presentations will explore themes central to Mkandawire's intellectual interests, such as African development, industrialization, social policy, and democracy. The conference aims to facilitate rigorous academic dialogue that bridges the past, present, and future of the African political economy, with Mkandawire's life and scholarship as a focal point.

Professor Thandika Mkandawire, who passed away on March 27, 2020, is widely regarded as one of Africa's most influential political economists. His interdisciplinary work sought to address the underlying causes of the continent's persistent underdevelopment, situating Africa's developmental challenges within the broader historical context of colonialism and global economic structures. Contrary to many Western economic perspectives, Mkandawire emphasized the role of external forces—such as global commodity markets and international financial institutions—rather than attributing blame to Africa itself. Despite his critical analysis of these structural challenges, Mkandawire was an unwavering Afro-optimist. He not only provided a nuanced and dignified account of Africa's political economy, but also championed solutions that centered on African agency in the quest for development.

In addition to being a first-rate scholar, Thandika Mkandawire was an institution builder par excellence. He served as the third Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) from 1985 to 1996. CODESRIA is the preeminent social science research network in Africa, and Mkandawire's tenure coincided with a period of profound economic challenges for the African continent, its universities, and by extension, CODESRIA. He ably steered the organization through this tumultuous period, significantly contributing to the influence and prestige that CODESRIA continues to hold today. Following his time at CODESRIA, Mkandawire directed the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in Switzerland and later assumed the Inaugural Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics. His leadership and commitment to advancing African scholarship continue to inspire scholars worldwide.

## Participants

**Hoor Al Qasimi**

Global Studies University, UAE

**Jimi O. Adesina**

University of South Africa

**Meg Arenberg**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE;  
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

**Adia Benton**

Northwestern University, USA

**Grieve Chelwa**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Aude Darnal**

Global South in the World Order  
Project, USA

**Kim Yi Dionne**

University of California Riverside,  
USA

**Zaynab El Bernoussi**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Eyob Balcha Gebremariam**

University of Bristol, UK

**Elizabeth Giorgis**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**

Stellenbosch University,  
South Africa

**Abdalla Hamdok**

Center for Africa's Development  
and Investment, UAE

**Majid Hannoum**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE;  
University of Kansas, USA

**Salah M. Hassan**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Emery Kalema**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Simon Manda**

University of Leeds, UK

**Giuliano Martiniello**

International University of Rabat,  
Rocade de Sale, Morocco

**Binyam Sisay Mendisu**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Maribel Morey**

Miami Institute for the Social  
Sciences, Miami, USA

**Faisal Garba Muhammed**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Godwin Murunga**

CODESRIA, Senegal

**Adebayo Olukoshi**

University of the Witwatersrand,  
South Africa

**Ken Ochieng' Opalo**

Georgetown University, USA

**Marion Ouma**

University of South Africa,  
South Africa

**Vijay Prashad**

Tricontinental: Institute for Social  
Research, Chile

**Rachel Beatty Riedl**

Cornell University, New York, USA

**Steve Sharra**

Independent Researcher and  
Educationist, Malawi

**Ndongo Samba Sylla**

International Development  
Economics Associates, UK

**Fiona Tregenna**

University of Johannesburg,  
South Africa

**John Thabiti Willis**

The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Paul Tiyambe Zeleza**

Howard University, USA

# Conference Program



## Program Schedule

### Thursday, November 14

- 3:00 pm **Registration**
- 4:00 pm **Welcome Remarks**  
 Hoor Al Qasimi – President, Global Studies University (GSU), Sharjah, UAE
- Salah M. Hassan – Dean, The Africa Institute; Chancellor, Global Studies University (GSU), Sharjah, UAE
- Grieve Chelwa – Associate Professor of Political Economy, The Africa Institute, Global Studies University (GSU), Sharjah, UAE
- 4:15 pm Opening Keynote  
**Thandika Mkandawire and the African Intellectual Decolonization Movement**
- Paul Tiyambe Zeleza – Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives, Howard University, Washington D.C, USA; Advisory Board Member, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE
- Chair: John Thabiti Willis – Associate Professor of African History, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah UAE
- 5:30 pm Book Launch  
**Re-envisioning the African and American Academies** (Dakar: CODESRIA Press, 2024)  
 Author: Paul Tiyambe Zeleza – Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives, Howard University, USA
- Chair: Godwin Murunga – Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal

### Friday, November 15

- 9:30 am Dialogue  
**Building a Community of Progressive Scholars in Africa**  
 Abdalla Hamdok – Executive Chairman, Center for Africa Development and Investment (CADI), Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Chair: Grieve Chelwa – Associate Professor of Political Economy, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE
- 10:30 am **Break**
- 10:45 am Panel 1  
**Social Policy and Development in Africa**
- Panelists:  
**The Nexus of Development and Social Policy: Breaking Bread with Thandika Mkandawire**  
 Jimi O. Adesina – Professor and South African Research Chair in Social Policy, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa (*Virtual*)
- Global Health Security, the Right to Health and Choiceless Democracies**  
 Adia Benton – Associate Professor of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Illinois, USA
- The State and Social Policymaking in Africa: Reflections from Thandika Mkandawire**  
 Marion Ouma – Research Associate, South Africa Research Chair on Social Policy, University of South Africa

**Social Policy, Structural Transformation, and Industrial Policy: A Thandika-Inspired Approach for South Africa**

Fiona Tregenna – Professor and South African Research Chair in Industrial Development, University of Johannesburg, South Africa  
 Chair: Zaynab El Bernoussi – Associate Professor of Political Science, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

12:45 pm

**LUNCH**

Venue – The Africa Institute Courtyard

2:15 pm

Panel 2

**Development and the Developmental State in Africa**

Panelists:

**How State Investment in Public Health Shapes Perceptions and Well-being in Africa**

Kim Yi Dionne – Associate Professor of Political Science, University of California Riverside, USA

4:15 pm

**Rethinking African Development and Reviving Development Thinking in Africa: The Contributions of Thandika Mkandawire**

Adebayo Olukoshi – Distinguished Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

4:30 pm

**The Political Economy of Industrial Policy in Africa: The Case of Kenya**

Ken Ochieng’ Opalo – Associate Professor of Political Science, Georgetown University, Washington D.C, USA

**The Economist as a Hunter of Western Myths and Pathologizing Constructs: On Mkandawire’s Contribution to African Political Economy**

Ndongo Samba Sylla – Director of Research, International Development Economics Associates (IDEAS), Oxford, UK

Chair: Faisal Garba Muhammed – Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

**Break**

Second Keynote

**Can We Build Scholarship for Our People? Walking by the Durban Beach with Thandika Mkandawire in 2001**

Vijay Prashad – Executive Director, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, Santiago, Chile

Chair: Elizabeth W. Giorgis – Professor of Art History, Theory and Criticism, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE



## Saturday, November 16

9:00 am	<p>Panel 3</p> <p><b>Intellectual Thought in Africa</b></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p><b>The Language-in-Education Conundrum in Africa: A Persistent Anomaly to Development</b> Binyam Sisay Mendisu, Associate Dean and Professor of African Languages and Linguistics, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p> <p><b>Grounded Methodologies: The Power Behind Thandika Mkandawire's Work</b> Godwin Murunga – Executive Secretary, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal</p> <p><b>Two World-Renowned Development Economists in Sweden: An Analysis of Thandika Mkandawire's Views on Gunnar Myrdal's Work</b> Maribel Morey – Executive Director, Miami Institute for the Social Sciences, Miami, USA</p> <p><b>Tracing Mkandawire's Thought on African Intellectuals and Higher Education in a Twenty-First Century Developmental State</b> Steve Sharra – Independent Researcher and Educationist; Former Dean and Associate Professor, School of Education, Social Sciences and Technology, UNICAF University, Malawi</p> <p>Chair: Meg Arenberg – Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p>	11:15 am	<p>Panel 4</p> <p><b>Globalization and Development in Africa</b></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p><b>Is Egypt's Currency Free-floating a mark of a De-dollarization Era?</b> Zaynab El Bernoussi – Associate Professor of Political Science, The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, UAE</p> <p><b>External Forces and Zambia's Permanent Debt Crisis</b> Grieve Chelwa – Associate Professor of Political Economy, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p> <p><b>AfCFTA: A Neoliberal Project with a Pan-African Clothing</b> Eyob Balcha Gebremariam – Research Associate, University of Bristol, UK</p> <p><b>Capture of Democracy and Development in a Globalized World</b> Rachel Beatty Riedl – Director of the Center on Global Democracy; Professor of Government, Cornell University, New York, USA</p> <p>Chair: Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw – Fatema Mernissi Postdoctoral Fellow in Social and Cultural Studies, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE; Lecturer and Researcher, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia</p>
11:00 am	<p><b>Break</b></p>	1:15 pm	<p><b>Lunch</b> Venue – The Africa Institute Courtyard</p>

2:15 pm	<p>Panel 5</p> <p><b>Agriculture, Land, and Structural Transformation in Africa</b></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p><b>The Case for Decolonizing and Radically Transforming International Assistance</b> Aude Darnal – Research Analyst, Founder, and Manager, Global South in the World Order Project, Washington D.C, USA.</p> <p><b>Critical Perspectives of the Developmental State in Zambia’s Agricultural Transformation: Power, Authority and Sovereignty</b> Simon Manda – Lecturer in International Development, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, UK</p> <p><b>Sugar Agroextractivism in Africa</b> Giuliano Martiniello – Associate Professor of Political Science, International University of Rabat, Rocade de Sale, Morocco</p> <p><b>Africapitalism as a Distraction from Structural Transformation?</b> Faisal Garba Muhammed – Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p> <p>Chair: Majid Hannoum – Ali A. Mazrui Senior Postdoctoral Fellow, The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, UAE; Professor, Social and Behavioral Sciences Anthropology, University of Kansas, USA</p>	4:30 pm	<p>Closing Keynote</p> <p><b>The Afterlife of Violent Histories: New Directions in Knowledge Production</b> Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela – Professor and South African Research Chair in Studies in Historical Trauma and Transformation, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Professor-at-large, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p> <p>Chair: Emery Kalema – Assistant Professor of History, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE</p>
4:15 pm	<p><b>Break</b></p>		

## Opening Keynote

### **Thandika Mkandawire and the African Intellectual Decolonization Movement**

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza – Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives, Howard University, Washington D.C, USA; Member of the Advisory Board, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

Thandika Mkandawire was a towering figure among the first generation of postcolonial African intellectuals, a group he often described in those terms. His work embodied what he called the historic and humanistic mission of African nationalism: to liberate African societies and academic communities from the enduring legacies of colonial and neocolonial economic and epistemic underdevelopment and dependency. Throughout his career, Mkandawire dedicated himself to creating and sustaining autonomous intellectual spaces, most notably through his leadership at CODESRIA during the challenging "lost decades" of structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s. Having had the privilege of knowing him personally and admiring his formidable intellect, I believe that Mkandawire's scholarly contributions, along with the decolonization—or what is now often termed decolonial—impulses that fueled his work, constitute an invaluable archive. This legacy demands critical engagement and should serve as a foundation upon which the second, third, fourth, and future generations of the African intelligentsia can build.

## Book Launch

### **Re-envisioning the African and American Academies** (Dakar: CODESRIA Press, 2024)

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza – Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives, Howard University, Washington D.C, USA

"Re-envisioning the African and American Academies" is an exceptionally comprehensive study by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza that provides a thought-provoking analysis of higher education in Africa and the United States, particularly through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. The book offers a rich and highly textured examination of the development of higher education in both regions since 2000. It begins with a detailed scrutiny of the rapid growth of universities in Africa and ongoing struggles for epistemic decolonization and concludes with an incisive investigation of the enduring debates over affirmative action in the United States. The chapters in between present fascinating comparative analyses of several key issues and events, placing trends and trajectories within a global context. Zeleza's work is a crucial resource for researchers, practitioners, and students seeking to understand and reform contemporary higher education systems.

## Dialogue

### **Building a Community of Progressive Scholars in Africa**

Abdalla Hamdok – Executive Chairman, Center for Africa Development and Investment (CADII), Abu Dhabi, UAE

This paper calls for the cultivation of progressive communities of scholars and scholarship in Africa. Beyond sustaining one another within the community, these communities can mutually support the production of knowledge that counters neoliberalism in Africa. A previous generation of African intellectuals succeeded in creating such a community to some extent; this dialogue offers valuable lessons for today's scholars.

## Panel 1

### **Social Policy and Development in Africa**

#### **The Nexus of Development and Social Policy: Breaking Bread with Thandika Mkandawire**

Jimi O. Adesina – South African Research Chair in Social Policy, College of Graduate Studies, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

At the heart of the late Professor Thandika Mkandawire's scholarship is the concern with redressing Africa's development challenges. This concern ranged from confronting the 'maldevelopment' effects of neoliberalism in Africa to mapping the institutional guardrails for Africa's development and developmental state efforts in Africa.

Mkandawire turned to the nexus of development and social policy in the latter part of his scholarly endeavors. In seeking to overcome the chasm between Development literature and Social Policy (Welfare Regime) scholarship, Mkandawire explored the interface of development and social policy. His inquiry addressed: "What questions does a country or society ask of its social policy when it is concerned with the task of development?" Grounded in the intrinsic and normative values of progressive social policy, Mkandawire examined ways in which social policy facilitates development efforts, disabusing the idea of a trade-off between equity and growth and highlighting how, historically, late (late) industrializers have been social policy pioneers. Transformative Social Policy emerged as both an idea and a framework from the research program Mkandawire initiated.

This paper explores Mkandawire's work on the nexus of development and social policy, situating it within the primary concern with Africa's development, the much-acclaimed work on universalism and targeting, and the efforts at constructing a typology of Africa's welfare regime.

### **Global Health Security, the Right to Health, and Choiceless Democracies**

Adia Benton – Associate Professor of Anthropology and African Studies, Northwestern University, Illinois, USA

This paper examines global health security planning and practice in the aftermath of the 2014 Ebola epidemic, focusing on the legal restitution and human rights to health claims made on behalf of Ebola survivors in a regional court.

The analysis highlights how the localization and nationalization of the global health security agenda reinscribe a containment-over-care approach to epidemic preparedness and response, which, in turn, formalizes and institutionalizes a violation of the human right to health—thereby exposing the dangerous, embodied effects of ‘choiceless democracy.’

### **The State and Social Policy Making in Africa: Reflections from Thandika Mkandawire**

Marion Ouma – Research Associate, South Africa Research Chair on Social Policy, University of South Africa

Policymaking reveals much about the nature of the state, especially its institutional characteristics. Institutions related to social policy and welfare provisioning often demonstrate the state’s orientation—whether interventionist or laissez-faire. The ideological orientation shapes how policymaking is done and how the state orders policies related to welfare and social provisioning. However, the African state has continually faced attack and criticism since independence, with the state characterized as weak and inefficient. On one hand, attacks on the state insinuate a diminished role of the African state in social policymaking and, subsequently, its role in social provisioning. On the other hand, the attacks on the state aim to weaken the African state, thereby creating room for endogenous ideas and actors in national social policymaking spaces. Drawing from the works of Thandika Mkandawire, this article examines the role of the African

state in social policymaking under the current ‘poverty agenda.’ The article uses the idea of ‘veritable cannibalization of state apparatuses to examine how the assault on the state in Africa has shaped policymaking and social provisioning.

### **Social Policy, Structural Transformation, and Industrial Policy: A Thandika-Inspired Approach for South Africa**

Fiona Tregenna – South African Research Chair in Industrial Development; Professor of Economics, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Thandika developed a novel approach to the nexus between social policy and industrial policy, an area often overlooked by scholars who focus exclusively on one or the other. His conceptualization of transformative social policy goes beyond merely emphasizing social protection; it recognizes social policy as playing a critical productive role in structural transformation and broader development. This paper begins by reflecting on Thandika’s approach as a foundation for discussing the relationships among social policy, structural change, and industrial policy in South Africa.

South Africa has the highest levels of unemployment and inequality in the world, and levels of poverty that are comparable to the levels of poverty in countries with far lower income per capita. This situation has promoted debates – in both the scholarly literature and in policy discourse – about the appropriate role of social policy. These debates have included the purported ‘trade-offs’ between social spending and other forms of expenditure that are considered ‘productive’ in mainstream discourse, as well as debates about specific proposed interventions such as a universal basic income grant.

The extremity of South Africa’s ‘triple challenges’ of poverty, unemployment, and inequality not only has devastating effects on

the lives of millions of South Africans but also constrains economic growth and feeds into a low-level equilibrium trap. A progressive developmental approach for South Africa needs to go beyond the importance of structural transformation and the types of industrial policies that might be appropriate for 'typical' middle-income countries, incorporating a developmental approach to social policy. This paradigm transcends the binaries of the spheres of production and distribution and of interventions focused on the 'productive,' 'pre-productive,' and 'post-productive' spheres. The analysis also has implications for the types of sectors and activities to be prioritized for industrial policy support in South Africa.

## Panel 2

### **Development and the Developmental State in Africa**

#### **How State Investment in Public Health Shapes Perceptions and Well-Being in Africa**

Kim Yi Dionne – Associate Professor of Political Science, University of California, Riverside, USA

As part of a broader project examining how democracy and inclusionary governance shape health outcomes, this study investigates how state investment in public health affects the well-being of African populations, with a particular focus on Malawi. Analyzing data from Afrobarometer, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), and the World Development Indicators (WDI), the research explores the relationship between health sector investments and both health service satisfaction and health outcomes across African countries. An in-depth analysis of Malawians' experiences within the health sector serves as a case study to illuminate broader regional trends. How do investments in health infrastructure and services influence public perceptions and actual health metrics? By exploring these dynamics, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-economic factors that shape health outcomes in Africa, offering valuable implications for scholars and practitioners focused on social welfare and population health.

#### **Rethinking African Development and Reviving Development Thinking in Africa: The Contributions of Thandika Mkandawire**

Adebayo Olukoshi – Distinguished Professor, Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

At the heart of the lifelong intellectual engagements of the late Thandika Mkandawire was an abiding commitment to the goal of securing the development of Africa. That preoccupation was

pursued through different phases of the evolution of scholarly and policy debates about the challenges and prospects for the transformation of the continent following the dawn of independence. At each phase of these debates, Mkandawire was part of a collective of scholars who consistently made the case for adopting policies and programs that went against the grain of mainstream and conventional wisdom. In posing radical alternatives to dominant mainstream proposals, he established himself at the forefront of the finest thinkers who brought nuance, wit, and finesse to the quest to rethink development in Africa and revive development thinking on the continent.

### **The Political Economy of Industrial Policy in Africa: The Case of Kenya**

Ken Ochieng' Opalo – Associate Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, USA

In recent years, industrial policy has regained acceptance as an important part of states' policy toolkit. However, there are still serious doubts about whether African countries can successfully execute industrial policies due to their weak states, political challenges, and position in the periphery of global value chains. Using a historical political economy approach, this paper describes African approaches to industrial policy over the last 60 years. First, it outlines the patterns of industrial policy in the region and the main factors explaining observable variation across different states. Second, it presents a case study of Kenya to highlight how domestic politics interacted with objective economic situations within and outside the country to shape the broad contours of Kenya's development policy. Overall, this paper enhances the understanding of African states' attempts to achieve broad-based economic development over the last 60 years.

### **The Economist as a Hunter of Western Myths and Pathologizing Constructs: On Mkandawire's Contribution to African Political Economy**

Ndongo Samba Sylla – Africa Research and Policy Director, International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs), Oxford, UK

Norbert Elias described the sociologist's task as that of a myth hunter. Economist Thandika Mkandawire has embraced the vocation of a myth hunter throughout his prolific career. While documenting the limitations and disastrous effects of the neoliberal policies of the Bretton Woods Institutions, Mkandawire has tirelessly worked to dismantle debilitating clichés about Africa by setting the empirical record straight. Yet, his monumental contribution to African political economy did not really confront the ultimate myth, what Brazilian economist Celso Furtado called the "myth of economic development." Indeed, Mkandawire's powerful analysis of and plea for developmental states seemed to be premised on the possibility of economic "catch-up" at the periphery of the global capitalist system. This belief or presupposition is probably the major point of departure between Mkandawirean economics and the scholarship of radical African economic thinkers such as Samir Amin.

## Second Keynote

### **Can We Build Scholarship for Our People? Walking by the Durban Beach with Thandika Mkandawire in 2001**

Vijay Prashad – Executive Director, The Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, Chile

One of the less remarked upon negative impacts of neoliberalism in the Global South – decisively on the African continent – has been the erosion of intellectual production to deal with the imminent problems of the people and a growth of intellectual production to suit Global North interests and imperatives. Is it possible, given the structural constraints, to revitalize intellectual production that draws upon the popular struggles for sovereignty and dignity that grip the Global South? As Thandika Mkandawire asked me over two decades ago, ‘Can we build scholarship for our people?’.

## Panel 3

### **Intellectual Thought in Africa**

#### **The Language-in-Education Conundrum in Africa: A Persistent Anomaly to Development**

Binyam Sisay Mendisu, Associate Dean and Professor of African Languages and Linguistics, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

The education systems in Africa, as they have been structured and implemented over recent decades, have failed to meaningfully improve the lives and aspirations of people. A significant, yet often overlooked, factor contributing to this failure is the language in education question. Despite longstanding recognition of the importance of introducing African languages in a meaningful way into schools as a language of instruction and a subject—starting in the early grades and gradually progressing to higher levels—little progress has been made. Where efforts have been made, their effect remains at a superficial level, as evidenced in countries like Ethiopia and South Africa. Moreover, educational systems across different parts of the continent have failed to reflect and acknowledge the linguistic diversity that is omnipresent outside the classroom, resulting in a disconnection between education, society, and culture, and promoting a sense of uprootedness. It is still common to witness Africa's linguistic diversity and richness to be paradoxically reduced to ‘colonial’ categorizations of Francophone, Anglophone, or Lusophone educational systems and frameworks. Education should be about empowerment, but existing systems seem to lead to disempowering and alienating



children, stripping them of their lived experiences, cultural heritage, and societal connections. Language, which should facilitate communication and collaboration, instead becomes a barrier, disproportionately disadvantaging some over others, and creating and sustaining inequality. Alternatively, classrooms need to utilize a variety of local languages to enhance communication and use education as a tool for empowerment. Education in the continent needs to focus on fostering local and internal capacities and connections while being aware of historical inequalities.

### **Grounded Methodologies: The Power Behind Thandika Mkandawire's Work**

Godwin R. Murunga – Executive Secretary, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal

Thandika Mkandawire's study, *Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections*, is perhaps one of the leading rebuttals of the assumptions underlying the use of the neo-patrimonial framework in the study of Africa's political economy. The starting point of his critique of neo-patrimonialism is methodological, though this is not apparent from a casual reading of his work. Indeed, many of Mkandawire's publications are organized around a sophisticated methodological grounding against which he conducts his inquiry. This approach enables him to innovate in his reading of African realities and to critique some of the 'leading' Africanist works on Africa. What are these methodological tools, and how do they manifest in Mkandawire's work? Why should students of African realities pay attention and learn from his body of work? Using his paper on neo-patrimonialism as an entry point, this paper offers a deliberate reflection on the key methodological questions that Mkandawire identified and used to analyze African realities.

### **Two World-Renowned Development Economists in Sweden: An Analysis of Thandika Mkandawire's Views on Gunnar Myrdal's Work**

Maribel Morey – Executive Director, Miami Institute for the Social Sciences, USA

In a tribute to his mentor, Thandika Mkandawire, sociologist Jimi Adesina described the Malawian economist as an 'economist with strong sociological sensibilities in the tradition of Gunnar Myrdal.' In an interview published in 2019, Mkandawire himself noted that the Swedish economist had influenced his thinking, describing Myrdal as one of the 'pioneers' of development. Further connecting these two leading economists, Jomo Kwame Sundaram reflected that Mkandawire and Myrdal once taught economics together at the University of Stockholm and that, during this time, Mkandawire's 'appreciation for social democracy and the now much maligned "welfare state"' grew during this unplanned extended sojourn in Sweden during the 1970s. In his publications, Mkandawire sometimes situated his vision for the future of development (and specifically for African development) in harmony with, and at other times in tension with, Myrdal's own. This presentation proposes to bring into dialogue the works of Mkandawire and Myrdal, two world-renowned development economists and colleagues from the University of Stockholm, both writing on democracy, development, and race. It ultimately suggests how we should best describe Mkandawire's nuanced views on Myrdal's work, including *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into The Poverty of Nations* (1968), which many economists describe as Myrdal's 'magnum opus' and 'required reading, or at least required dipping into, for all students interested in development,' though Mkandawire himself judged it for its implicit "pessimism".

### Tracing Mkandawire's Thought on African Intellectuals and Higher Education in a Twenty-First Century Developmental State

Steve Sharra – Independent Researcher and Educationist; Former Dean and Associate Professor, UNICAF University, Malawi

On 5 January 1994, Thandika Mkandawire landed at Kamuzu International Airport, marking his first time on Malawian soil in 32 years. He recounted the experience and the emotions he felt in an article in the July 1994 issue of the *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly* (SAPEM) magazine. Nine years later, in June 2003, Mkandawire gave a speech at a conference marking the 10th anniversary of Malawi's multiparty referendum. It was the first time he spoke at a Malawian conference. Having had his Malawian citizenship stripped from him while on a research visit to Latin America during his studies in the United States in the 1960s, Mkandawire's intellectual trajectory positioned him to develop a particular outlook on the role of African intellectuals and the place of higher education in Africa's development. This paper traces Mkandawire's thought on how African intellectuals have imagined Africa over the eras of nationalism, independence, and post-independence. The paper draws on Mkandawire's oeuvre as expressed in articles, public lectures, books, discussion listservs, social media, and personal conversations. The paper uses Mkandawire's trope of generations of African intellectuals to analyze the role of higher education and the state of Pan-Africanism in re-imagining a 21st-century African developmental state.

### Panel 4

#### Globalization and Development in Africa

##### Is Egypt's Currency Free-Floating a Mark of a De-Dollarization Era?

Zaynab El Bernoussi – Associate Professor of Political Science, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

The post-Bretton Woods world has been notoriously marked by the rise of the dollar and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as both a key institution of the international order and a trendsetter for development policies in the global South, particularly monetary ones. In the IMF's imagination, economic interconnectedness, fueled by rapid dollar transactions, is believed to bring about economic strengthening and prosperity in the global South, following Keynesian principles. However, the economic take-off of the global South has stalled, and dependency theory has provided a strong rebuttal of mainstream development policies, which have become mechanisms for peripherizing global South countries and entrenching them in a process of resource atrophy, including currency resources. Additionally, some theorists argue that global economic inequalities are being weaponized for geopolitical control (Whyte, 2022; Farrell, 2023). Furthermore, there has been a significant process of financialization, driven by the dollar, which has undermined political and institutional emancipation and led to the systematic growth of debt (Nesvetailova, 2014). This paper reviews the literature on dollar hegemony, evaluating whether it is abating (Zongheng, 2024) or persisting (Vernengo, 2023), with a focus on Egypt's situation. It examines Egypt's currency story since 2016, when the country, under IMF pressure, began floating

its pound in an effort to accelerate its development strategy. The analysis evaluates claims regarding the relative strengthening of the Egyptian pound and how the currency ecosystem in Egypt has changed since 2016, particularly with the growing role of China as an economic partner. The paper aims to determine whether Egypt's currency experience since 2016 exemplifies a de-dollarization era.

### External Forces and Zambia's Permanent Debt Crisis

Grieve Chelwa – Associate Professor of Political Economy, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

With the exception of very brief periods in its history, Zambia has been in a permanent state of debt crisis. Contrary to the literature that focuses on internal explanations for debt accumulation, this article argues that external forces have been dominant in the Zambian case. Specifically, we consider the roles played by three such forces: the international price of copper, the International Monetary Fund-imposed conditionality on fiscal constraints, and the US monetary policy. We argue that these three forces have, at various times, 'conspired' to influence debt dynamics in Zambia. The analysis presented suggests more realistic pathways through which the country can prevent or, at the very least, better manage the dangerous build-up of debt.

### AfCFTA: A Neoliberal Project with a Pan-African Clothing

Eyob Balcha Gebremariam – Research Associate, Perivoli Africa Research Centre, University of Bristol, UK

The AfCFTA, a continental initiative of paramount importance, has the potential to significantly enhance intra-African trade. However, while the creation of the largest free trade zone is acknowledged, caution is necessary, particularly when pursuing structural transformation in African economies. It is crucial to avoid perceiving trade liberalization and free markets as a universal remedy for Africa's developmental challenges. The

intricate structural bottlenecks, along with persistent issues such as poverty, ignorance, disease, illiteracy, gender inequality, and unemployment in African economies, are multifaceted and require comprehensive solutions that go beyond the mere establishment of a frictionless trading process at African borders.

This paper explores the extent to which and how trade liberalization through the AfCFTA shapes African states' capacity to pursue transformative social policies. Building on Samir Amin's conceptualization of "macro-regions," Mkandawire (2017) proposed a heuristic model for understanding African state capacity. The paper will empirically examine the interplay between the colonial origins of the dominant political economy orientation of African states, the variation of the revenue base, and state-society relations. The aim is to provide an analytical response to how the neoliberal framing and orientation of the AfCFTA curtails the capacity of African states and limits the possibilities for formulating and implementing transformational social and industrial policies.

### Capture of Democracy and Development in a Globalized World

Rachel Beatty Riedl – Director of the Center on Global Democracy and Professor of Government, Cornell University, New York, USA

The historically positive relationship between democracy and development hinged on the idea that development moved the lower class out of poverty, thereby growing the middle class and reducing inequality. That reduction in inequality led to a greater ability to fulfill *redistributive demands* that the lower and middle classes would make upon the rich, contributing to both human development and democratic accountability in policymaking. Yet, even as extraction contributes to rising national GDP in many countries, inequality continues to increase. For example, the wealth gap in South Africa remains largely unchanged from 1994, and the social architecture of three centuries of exclusionary

rule has maintained the country as one of the world's most unequal; participatory multi-party, multi-racial democracy has failed to narrow the imbalance between rich and poor. Across the continent and globally, many are disaffected with electoral democracy and how it is currently practiced. The lack of democratic governance oriented to address inequality, security, public service provision, and anti-corruption leads citizens to disengage (exit) or seek extra-institutional routes to meet their needs. As Mkandawire illuminated, the democracy-development nexus is a fallacy when development is not more than the maximization of GDP for those at the top. Human development addresses poverty, security, distributive equity, social justice, and sustainable livelihoods – including land, water, and air. The current era is marked by the capture of the *market economy and democracy* to maximize the public good and human development in a new period of extreme globalized externalities. This has fundamentally reversed the circle of development and democracy from a virtuous one to a vicious one. This vicious relationship is demonstrated in three contextual domains: 1) carbon and climate; 2) transnational illicit finance; 3) narco-trafficking and cross-border insecurity. The globalized era of transnational mobility (of goods, people, and finance) creates new negative externalities that are not well regulated by domestic governance structures and the associated public policy pressures that democracies can mobilize. This leads to further democratic discontent and exit from legal, regulated economic exchange.

## Panel 5

### **Agriculture, Land, and Structural Transformation in Africa**

#### **The Case for Decolonizing and Radically Transforming International Assistance**

Aude Darnal – Research Analyst, Founder, and Manager, Global South in the World Order Project, Washington D.C, USA

The international aid system is in need of reform. Despite rhetoric about localization, a meager 1.2 percent of international humanitarian aid directly reaches local actors. Overall, there is a lack of transparency and awareness in international policy circles on how funds flow from the donor level to the field. The issue is not just about a lack of capacity on the part of local actors—a sweeping statement often used by Western aid stakeholders to justify their marginalization. Donors also need to reform their understanding of aid, be willing to share power with Global South champions of change, and increase their capacities to adapt to local development and humanitarian systems. The international community also needs to explore alternative financing channels for social transformation. The question should not simply be about “how much,” but also about “how.” In that regard, not-for-profit incubation, otherwise called by some local actors “social hubs,” is a promising solution to address a part of the conundrum.

### **Critical Perspectives of the Developmental State in Zambia's Agricultural Transformation: Power, Authority and Sovereignty**

Simon Manda – Lecturer in International Development, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, UK

This paper uses the test case of Zambia to reflect on the centrality of the state in agricultural transformation and what this means for sustainable development and sovereignty. From structural adjustment programs of the 1990s to inward foreign direct investments in the post-fuel-feed-food crises of 2007/8, African states have reorganized and rearticulated themselves in the era of agriculture for development. This agricultural modernization agenda enables casting a spotlight on state power and authority and what its reorganization means for sustainable development and sovereignty—issues entangled in the historical and contemporary causes of land dispossession.

The study draws on a decade of research in Zambia and on documentary analysis to explore and understand the changing nature of the state in the face of inward 'pressure.' Data centers on national policy and legal frameworks relied upon to modernize agriculture, processes of foreign land acquisitions and investments, and the integration of local communities and implications. Results show that while the potential for state power and authority (sovereignty) in agricultural transformation does exist, international and national political processes coalesce to compromise prospects for sovereignty and sustainability.

Divergent outcomes at the local level are symptomatic of Thandika Mkandawire's '*investors with zero benefit to the local communities*,' and the reasons and possible improvements are examined. The argument is made that sovereignty is crucial for

establishing a developmental state, but this requires specific systems of national innovation. Ultimately, the paper reflects on Thandika Mkandawire's understanding of the state and agriculture in Africa and the possibilities of a Zambian developmental state as a requisite for success in agricultural transformation. This includes considering how developing countries in Africa could advance technological improvements, leverage state and non-state actors, and develop national systems of innovation to possibly expand the scope for transformative and equitable local participation and development.

Co-authors:

B.M. Mushingi – Director, Liveli-Centre for Consultancy and Research, Lusaka, Zambia

Lizzy Banda – Undergraduate Research Supervisor, School of Education, Social Sciences and Technology, University of Lusaka, Lusaka, Zambia

### **Sugar Agroextractivism in Africa**

Giuliano Martiniello – Associate Professor of Political Science,  
International University of Rabat, Rocade de Sale, Morocco

Large-scale land acquisitions, which promoters have considered as ‘development opportunities’ and critics have labeled as ‘land grabs,’ escalated in the last couple of decades as a result of converging and mutually reinforcing financial, food, and energy crises. Their resurgence, which presents historical continuity and changes with previous waves of colonial land dispossession, especially in settler colonies, altered existing patterns of land tenure and use: from food for national markets to cash crops for international markets, and from forest land to farmland and/or intensive cattle rearing, and mining. Ostensibly, Africa has been the epicenter of what some have termed ‘a new scramble for land.’ Further research has shown that half of these land deals revolved around crops with diverse fungibility and multiple end uses, i.e., food, feed, and fuel. This study explores the significance of sugarcane cultivation in driving land enclosures and contract farming schemes in Africa, with particular attention to the making of state-capital politico-economic assemblages. It analyzes the patterns of expansion of sugarcane cultivation in Africa through the concepts of commodity frontier, flexi-crops, and agro-extractivism. Drawing from several case studies in Uganda (Kakira Sugar Works in Busoga, Hoima Sugar Limited in Hoima, and Amuru Sugar Works in Acholi) and Tanzania (Kilombero Sugar Limited in Morogoro), it argues that advancing the sugar frontier has been instrumental in driving land enclosures, generating widespread dispossession and social conflict on the one hand, and adverse incorporation of poor farmers on the other, while simultaneously jeopardizing agrarian livelihoods and existing agroscares and ecosystems.

### **Africapitalism as a Distraction from Structural Transformation?**

Faisal Garba Muhammed – Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

There is a resurgent belief that the answer to Africa’s socio-economic challenges lies in what the Nigerian billionaire Tony Elumelu has popularized as Africapitalism. Some academics and policymakers have latched onto Elumelu’s fusion of capitalism and Africa, claiming that what Africa needs is capitalism with African characteristics. This, coupled with artistic affirmations around Blackness and an emerging diasporic interest in landed property on the continent—aimed at “exploring” an assumed untapped “homeland”—has repurposed the struggle for the structural transformation of African economies into an ideological focus on reforming the color of capitalism. These ideas are not new. Some of the foremost figures in Black liberation advocated for the accumulation of wealth by a section of Black people as a solution to the Black condition. This contrasts with thinkers and movements that view capitalism as the foundation of oppression and subjugation and, therefore, reject any association of capitalism with liberation projects. This presentation traces the emergence of the discourse of Africapitalism, its demobilizing effects, and what it means for the struggle for an alternative organization of economy and society. It argues that while Africapitalism and other versions of “indigenized exploitation” can draw on historical and “tradion(lized) outlooks such as “self-reliance” and property valorization—they, in reality, distract social movements and thought away from the unresolved question of transforming African economies to serve the needs of ordinary people. True transformation requires economies that are socially sustainable, operating through equitable production and distribution arrangements, guided by logics beyond individual accumulation.

Closing Keynote

**The Afterlife of Violent Histories: New Directions in Knowledge Production**

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela – Professor and South African Research Chair in Studies in Historical Trauma and Transformation, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Professor-at-large, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

# Biographies





The **Late Thandika Mkandawire** (10 October 1940 – 27 March 2020) was a development economist, former refugee, and the inaugural Chair in African Development at London School of Economics (LSE). He was a vocal critic of the predominant neo-liberal development theories of the 1990s, arguing that they lacked an African perspective. Born in Zimbabwe, Mkandawire was raised in Zambia and Malawi. He became involved in Malawi's independence movement, initially protesting on the streets and later through his journalism. He moved to the United States to study, but in 1965, during a visit to Ecuador, the Malawian government revoked his passport. This left him *persona non grata* until he was granted political asylum and eventually gained citizenship in Sweden. He did not return to Malawi until 1994, after 30 years in exile. In his academic career, Mkandawire was a founding member of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies and The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar, Senegal. He later served as director of the UN Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva before joining LSE as the Chair in African Development. His final academic position was as the Olof Palme Professor for Peace at the Swedish Institute for Future Studies. Thandika Mkandawire passed away in Stockholm on 27 March 2020.

**Jimi O. Adesina** is a Professor and the South African Research Chair in Social Policy at the University of South Africa. He has previously taught at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, Rhodes University, and the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Adesina has held visiting appointments at several institutions, including Ulster University (Northern Ireland), Oxford University (UK), and the Nordic Africa Institute (Sweden). He is a former President of the South African Sociological Association and has served on the Executive Committee of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). In 2005, he was elected to the Academy of Science of South Africa. His research interests include Sociology and Social Policy.

**Hoor Al Qasimi** is the President of Global Studies University (GSU), where she has been instrumental in the institution's development since the establishment of The Africa Institute in 2018. This initiative builds on the historical Afro-Arab cultural exchange, including the pivotal 1976 "Symposium on African and Arab Relations." Under her leadership, GSU reaffirms its commitment to academic excellence and innovative programming. Collaborating closely with Dr. Salah M. Hassan, Chancellor of GSU and Dean of The Africa Institute, Al Qasimi continues to shape the university's vision and direction. As a practicing artist and curator, Al Qasimi also serves as the President and founding Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF), which has become a key player in the regional and international art scene since its inception in 2009. Her efforts have expanded the Foundation's offerings, including major exhibitions, artist residencies, and educational programs. She co-curated the Sharjah Biennial and was elected President of the International Biennial Association in 2017. Al Qasimi is the Artistic Director for the upcoming 2026 Biennale of Sydney and serves on various advisory boards, including those of Kunst-Werke Berlin and Ashkal Alwan in Beirut. She holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London, a diploma in Painting from the Royal Academy of Arts, and a BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art.

**Meg Arenberg** is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at The Africa Institute, where she also teaches in the African Languages and Translation Program. She earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Indiana University Bloomington and has held postdoctoral positions at Rutgers University and Princeton University. Her research focuses on 20th and 21st-century African literatures, with particular interests in Kiswahili poetics, intertextuality, and translation studies. Arenberg is currently working on her book project, *Disruptive Forms: Tanzanian Literature Beyond Nation*, and two literary translations from Kiswahili. In 2024, she was named one of the top ten recipients of the PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant.

**Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw** is a Fatema Mernissi Postdoctoral Fellow in Social and Cultural Studies at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Studies from the University of Cape Town. Asfaw's work explores social and cultural history, urbanism, and political consciousness in 20th-century Ethiopia. He is currently expanding his research to examine everyday youth life in Addis Ababa through unexplored "archives" such as musical and literary documents. In addition to his academic work, he is a Lecturer and Researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, and has contributed to Ethiopian media on politics and history.

**Adia Benton** is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and African Studies at Northwestern University, USA, where she is also affiliated with the Science in Human Culture Program. She is the author of the award-winning book *HIV Exceptionalism: Development through Disease in Sierra Leone* and is currently working on a new book about the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak.

**Grieve Chelwa** is the Chair of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Political Economy at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah. Previously, he was Director of Research at the Institute on Race, Power, and Political Economy at The New School and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, where he also directed the MBA Program. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard University and Wits University. Chelwa's research, which focuses on political economy and African development, has appeared in leading journals such as the *Journal of Economic Literature* and *Social Science & Medicine*. He is also a prolific commentator on African economic issues, with contributions to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *BBC*. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

**Aude Darnal** is a Research Analyst and Project Manager at the Stimson Center and the founder and leader of the Global South in the World Order Project. This initiative is dedicated to elevating geopolitical perspectives from Global South policy stakeholders and furthering representation in Western policy circles, especially in Washington. It aims to strengthen South-South cooperation and build bridges between Southern and Western policy experts to advance global governance reform and equity in international affairs and foster sustainable prosperity and security for all. The project features policy experts from the Global South to address international affairs from their analytical frameworks, deconstruct Western prevailing assumptions about

the world order and the role of Global South countries in it, and promote a deep transformation of the international system toward equitable partnerships between Southern and Western nations. Darnal is from Martinique, in the Caribbean; her primary field of research has been in the peacebuilding and development sectors, and she has worked in West Africa. She now focuses on supporting efforts to reform the international financial architecture and unlock climate and development financing for Global South nations.

**Kim Yi Dionne** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Riverside. She is the Editor-in-Chief of *Good Authority*, a blog that provides political science insights to a broader audience, and the founder and co-host of *Ufahamu Africa*, a weekly podcast exploring life and politics on the continent. Dionne's research focuses on African politics, with a particular emphasis on health and development interventions aimed at improving the human condition. Her work often involves the analysis of public opinion and political behavior. She is the author of *Doomed Interventions: The Failure of Global Responses to AIDS in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), with much of the book's data collected during her Fulbright Fellowship in Malawi from 2008 to 2009.

**Zaynab El Bernoussi** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, specializing in dignity politics, international relations, and international political economy. She holds a Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences from the Catholic University of Louvain, an MPA from Columbia University, and a MiF from Instituto de Empresa. Prior to her current role, El Bernoussi was a Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University Abu Dhabi and held academic positions at Al Akhawayn University and Sciences Po Rabat. She has conducted research as a visiting scholar at Smith College and Harvard University. Active in international relations, she is the Vice-Chair of the Global South Caucus of the

International Studies Association and a founding member of the Security in Context network. Her scholarly contributions have earned her Fulbright and Carnegie awards, and her work has been recognized with the Arab Prize for her article on dignity politics. El Bernoussi's book, *Dignity in the Egyptian Revolution*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2021. Her research focuses on the politicization of dignity demands in the global South, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East.

**Eyob Balcha Gebremariam** is an Ethiopian scholar-activist whose research interests include decolonial knowledge production, African political economy, the politics of development, and youth engagement in politics. He was awarded the 2022 Thandika Mkandawire Prize for Outstanding Scholarship in African Political Economy and Economic Development. Gebremariam has taught postgraduate courses in African political economy and development at the London School of Economics (LSE) and Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Bologna campus, Italy. He is currently a Research Associate at the Perivoli Africa Research Centre at the University of Bristol, UK.

**Elizabeth W. Giorgis** is the Chair of Humanities and Professor of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah. She earned her Ph.D. in the History of Art and Visual Studies from Cornell University and a Master's in Museum Studies from New York University. Previously, she held leadership roles as the Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Art at Addis Ababa University. An accomplished scholar, Giorgis serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals, including *Transition Magazine* and *Northeast African Studies Journal*. Her book, *Modernist Art in Ethiopia* (2019), is a foundational study of Ethiopian visual modernism and has garnered multiple accolades, including the African Studies Association's 2020 Bethwell A. Ogbot Book Prize. Giorgis's research interests include the representation of Ethiopian women within the broader context of politics and exclusion. She has participated in numerous international conferences and exhibitions, including her recent exhibition with the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2024, "Henok Melkamzer: Telsem Symbols and Imagery," which explored the Ethiopian art form of "telsem" and its significance within the modernist narrative.

**Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela** holds the South African National Research Foundation's Research Chair in Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma and serves as the Director of the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife

of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ) at Stellenbosch University. She has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Templeton Prize and the Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award, the highest academic honor in Africa. Her influential works, such as *A Human Being Died that Night*, which will be reprinted as a Mariner Classic, reflect her commitment to addressing historical trauma. Additionally, she has contributed to various edited volumes focused on healing and memory, including *Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition and Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness*. Gobodo-Madikizela's research interests center on historical trauma and its intergenerational effects, exploring what "repair" might entail for those affected by violent pasts. Her extensive contributions to the field have established her as a key figure in discussions on trauma, healing, and societal reconciliation. She currently serves as a Professor-at-large at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah.

**Abdalla Hamdok** currently serves as the Executive Chairman of The Center for Africa's Development and Investment (CADI), Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. He was the 15th Prime Minister of the Republic of Sudan from August 21, 2019, to January 2, 2022. A seasoned policy analyst and economist with over 35 years of experience addressing development challenges across Africa at national, sub-regional, and continent-wide levels, Hamdok was the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) from 2011 to 2018. Prior to this, he held several senior positions at UNECA, including Director of the Governance and Public Administration Division, Director of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Regional Integration Division, and Senior Governance Expert/Coordinator. At the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Hamdok was the Regional Director for Africa and the Middle East, working on the Africa Governance Project. He also served as Acting Director at the Development Policy Management Division in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His career includes key roles at the African Development Bank, United Nations Development Program, and Deloitte & Touche Management Consultants. Hamdok holds a PhD and MA (Econ) in Economics from the University of Manchester and a BSc (Hons) from the University of Khartoum in Sudan.

**Majid Hannoum** is the Ali A. Mazrui Senior Fellow in Global African Studies at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, and a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kansas, USA. He earned a Ph.D. in Arabic and Comparative Literature from Sorbonne University, France, and a second Ph.D. in History and Anthropology from Princeton University, USA. Hannoum is the editor of *Practicing Sufism: Sufi Politics and Performance in Africa* (2016) and has authored several notable works, including *Secular Narrations and Transdisciplinary Knowledge* (2023), *The Invention of the Maghreb: Between Africa and the Middle East* (2021), and *Living Tangier: Migration, Race, and Illegality in a Moroccan City* (2020). His academic career includes positions at Princeton University, the College of New Jersey, the New School for Social Research in NYC, and Bard College.

**Salah M. Hassan** is the Chancellor of Global Studies University (GSU), and Dean of The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah —roles he assumed following the establishment of GSU in 2023. He has served as Director of The Africa Institute since its founding in 2018. Additionally, Hassan holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in Africana Studies, Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture at Cornell University, USA. Hassan is an art critic, curator, editor, and co-founder of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Duke University Press). He currently serves as a member of the editorial advisory board of *Atlantica*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. His recent publications include *Ahmed Morsi: A Dialogic Imagination* (2021) and *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (2012). Notable exhibitions he has curated include *Gavin Jantjes: To Be Free! A Retrospective 1970–2023* (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2023; Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2024) and *Kamala Ibrahim Ishag: States of Oneness* (Serpentine South, London, 2023), among others. Hassan's work has been supported by prestigious grants and fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Foundation, Sharjah Art Foundation, and other institutions. He was honored as the 2021 Distinguished Professor by the College Art Association (CAA), the oldest and largest scholarly organization dedicated to the history and criticism of the visual arts.

**Emery Kalema** is an Assistant Professor of History at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, holding a Ph.D. from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He has served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institut de Sociologie at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the South African Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation at Stellenbosch University,

South Africa. Kalema was also a Summer Program in Social Science Fellow at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study and received the inaugural CSAAD Research Fellowship at New York University. In 2021, he won the Central African Studies Association (CASA) Essay Prize for Best Published Article by a Junior Scholar. Kalema's research centers on power, politics, memory, and trauma. He is currently working on a book project titled *Violence and Memory: The Mulele 'Rebellion' in Postcolonial Congo*, which investigates the suffering caused by the Mulele Rebellion (1963-1968) and its lasting effects on survivors' memories, exploring the complex relationships between embodied suffering and psychological trauma.

**Simon Manda** is a Lecturer in International Development at the School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, UK. He is the Co-Director of the Centre for Global Development (CGD), an Executive Member of the Leeds Centre for African Studies (LUCAS), and a committee member of the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK). Manda is also a Senior Research Fellow with the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and a Fellow at the Pan-African Scientific Research Council. His research focuses on inward foreign direct investments in agriculture and agribusiness expansion, examining their national and local implications in Southern Africa. This includes the effects of agricultural expansion on rural economies and the role of state institutions. His current work addresses the politics of global development, including land and climate change politics, and explores policy and legal mechanisms for adapting to repetitive flooding in communities.

**Giuliano Martiniello** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Sciences Po Rabat, Université Internationale de Rabat, and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut. Before joining UIR, he was an Assistant Professor at the American University of Beirut (2015-2020), a Research Fellow at the Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University (2011-2015), and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal (2012-2013). He earned his PhD in Politics from the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds (2011). Martiniello is broadly interested in the political economy, political sociology, and political ecology of agrarian and environmental change. His research focuses on land regimes, food and farming systems, large-scale land enclosures, contract farming, conservation and deforestation, rural social conflicts, and agrarian movements in Africa and the Middle East. He has published articles in top international journals such as *World Development*,

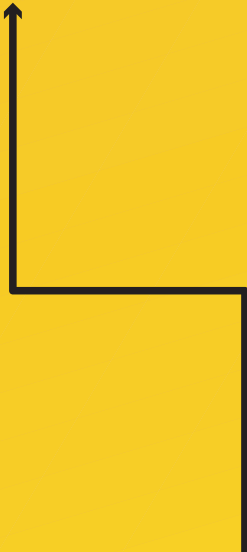
**Ndongo Samba Sylla** is a Senegalese Development Economist and former technical advisor at the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal. He is currently the Africa Research and Policy Director at the International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs) in Dakar. Sylla has authored, co-authored, and edited several notable books, including *Africa's Last Colonial Currency: The CFA Franc Story*, *Economic and Monetary Sovereignty for 21st Century Africa*, *Imperialism and the Political Economy of the Global South's Debt*, and *Revolutionary Movements in Africa: An Untold Story*.

**Fiona Tregenna** holds the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Industrial Development, heading this center of research, capacity-building, and public and policy engagement. She is also a Professor of Economics at the University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on structural change, industrialization and deindustrialization, innovation and technological upgrading. Tregenna has published widely in leading journals, received awards and grants for her research, led large research projects, co-edited several books, and serves on the editorial boards of various international journals and book series. She has been involved in economic policy issues for more than 25 years, serving on many panels and councils, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Advisory Council and the Presidential Economic Advisory Council for South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Tregenna also sits on the boards of UNU-WIDER, the Human Sciences Research Council, and the Institute for Economic Justice, and part-time on the Competition Tribunal (South Africa). She has advised international organizations such as UNIDO, UNCTAD, the United Nations University, and the ILO, and has contributed to several flagship United Nations reports. Tregenna is an elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and is affiliated with SOAS University of London as a Professorial Research Associate and a Fellow of the Development Leadership Dialogue. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cambridge.

**John Thabiti Willis** is an Associate Professor of African History at The Africa Institute (GSU) in Sharjah. He holds a Ph.D. in History from Emory University. Prior to this, he served as an Associate Professor of African History at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, USA. Willis previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies and as the Director of Africana Studies at Carleton College from 2019 to 2022. He was a Carleton College Mellon New Directions Fellow from 2020 to 2023. His research focuses on the history and politics of masquerade performances among the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria, explored in his book *Masquerading Politics: Kinship, Gender, and Ethnicity in a Yoruba Town, Otta, 1774-1928* (2018). This work received recognition as a finalist for the African Studies Association's Best Book Prize and won the Yoruba Studies Book Prize (2020). He is currently investigating Africa's contributions to pearling in the Gulf through oral histories and geographic information systems.

**Paul Tiyambe Zeleza** is a Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives at Howard University, U.S.A. He previously served as Associate Provost and North Star Distinguished Professor at Case Western Reserve University (2021-2023) and Vice Chancellor at the United States International University (USIU) in Kenya (2016-2021). Zeleza has held leadership positions at Trent University, the University of Illinois, Pennsylvania State University, and Loyola Marymount University, and has been an Honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town since 2006. He has been active in various national and international associations and notably secured a \$63.2 million grant from the Mastercard Foundation to support scholarships for 1,000 African students. An interdisciplinary scholar, Zeleza's research spans African economic history, diaspora studies, and cultural studies, with over 400 publications, including 28 books and several award-winning titles. His upcoming works include *Re-envisioning African and American Universities* (2024) and *The Chronicles of African University Leaders* (2024). Zeleza earned his B.A. from the University of Malawi, an M.A. from the University of London, and a Ph.D. in economic history from Dalhousie University in Canada. He currently serves as an Advisory Board Member of The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah.

# About Us



## **The Africa Institute, Global Studies University**

Based in Sharjah, UAE, The Africa Institute is a higher education academic entity dedicated to advancing the study, research, and documentation of Africa and its diaspora, with a focus on the humanities and social sciences. It operates as a center of research and documentation, and a postgraduate studies institution, offering master's and Ph.D. programs as well as diplomas in African Languages and Translation. The Africa Institute aims to be a center of excellence to train a new generation of critical thinkers in African and African diaspora studies. In 2023, The Africa Institute became part of the newly established Global Studies University (GSU), integrated into its network of semi-independent and interdisciplinary institutes, with each focusing on different regions worldwide. These institutes emphasize postgraduate studies, research, and documentation of the histories, cultures, and peoples of various global regions. The next entity to be officially established in 2024 is The Asia Institute. Additionally, preparations are underway to launch other institutes focusing on Oceania, Europe, and the Americas in the coming years. The Africa Institute is led by Hoor Al Qasimi, President of Global Studies University, and Salah M. Hassan, Dean of The Africa Institute and Chancellor of Global Studies University. For more information, visit [theafricainstitute.org](http://theafricainstitute.org).

## **Africa Hall**

The original Africa Hall building was inaugurated on the same day as the Municipality's building in 1976, however, the original buildings of both were first built in the early 1970s as part of a wave of modernist government buildings. The building was inaugurated as "Africa Hall," and its first cultural and political event was the Arab African Symposium. The new Africa Hall, which was rebuilt on the site of the original building - demolished in 2015 is part of the future complex of buildings for The Africa Institute.

Africa Hall serves as a knowledge center and platform for conferences, symposia, lectures, film screenings, and staged plays related to the activities of the University's outreach to the larger community of Sharjah, UAE, and beyond.



جامعة  
الدراسات  
العالمية  
GLOBAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY

[THEAFRICAINSTITUTE.ORG](http://THEAFRICAINSTITUTE.ORG)

