

Workshop Report

“Citizenship in times of change: East-African perspectives”

Part 1

22.04.2024 Basel, Switzerland

Part 2

29.04.2024 Freiburg, Germany

organized by

Arnold Bergstraesser Institute
Africa Centre for Transregional Research of the University of Freiburg
Basel Institute on Governance
Centre for African Studies from the University of Basel



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On the 22nd and 29th of April the "Citizenship in times of change: East-African perspectives" Workshop was held as a collaborative effort between the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, the Africa Centre for Transregional Research of the University of Freiburg, and the Basel Institute on Governance and Centre for African Studies from the University of Basel, to deepen understanding on the topic and promote cross-border discussion amongst colleagues.

The two-part workshop centered on the temporal dimensions of fluctuating citizenship, affected by crisis, violent conflict and re-foundations of polities, which offer opportunities for mobilization (or resistance), but also potentially new constraints on civil rights. It also explored how denial of citizenship and civil rights during conflicts or occupation influences migration decisions and experiences, alongside how citizenship can change due to constitutional revisions or shifts in regional structures. From various disciplines and foci, this workshop brought together reflections on citizenship in times of change.



On April 22nd, one keynote and three presentations took place covering a range of interesting topics in the University of Basel, chaired by Dr. Saba Kassa. The keynote lecture, titled "Citizenship beyond the nation-state? Exploring the prospects of the envisioned East African Political Federation," was delivered by Prof. Alexander Makulilo from the University of Dar es Salaam. He emphasized the role and potential of the East African Political Federation to redefine citizenship. Following that, Gloria Kenyatta, a PhD Candidate from the University of Freiburg, presented on the Kenyan citizenship regime in the light of public participation. Then, Dr. Anusa Daimon, Senior Lecturer at the University of Malawi, discussed the African Union Border Program and citizenship and belonging politics on the Malawi-Mozambique borderland. As a final presentation, Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba, a PhD candidate from the University of Basel, presented on rethinking citizenship and belonging in Switzerland, exploring evolving notions of citizenship and belonging within the Swiss context. At the conclusion of the day, there was time provided for a discussion and a thorough analysis of the day from Dr. Michael Aeby as well as a final group discussion of the day's topics.



The second session, on the 29th of April, followed a similar structure with a number of presentations, chaired by Dr. Franzisca Zanker. In the beginning, Catherine N'gang'a, a PhD Candidate from the University of Freiburg, presented on "Competing Ideologies in the Construction of Post-Conflict Ethiopia," with a particular emphasis on contested notions of citizenship within the country's reconstruction efforts. Following that, two PhD candidates from the University of Basel, focused on distinct aspects of citizenship: first Matthias Claudio Maurer Rueda presented on "Awkward citizenship in Central Switzerland," then Rufino Sitoë examined citizenship rights in the context of violent extremism in Northern Mozambique. Following the third lecture, the conclusion of the

day's presentations and related topics was reflected by reflections from Prof. Andreas Mehler. This was followed by a group discussion, providing an opportunity for participants to share insights, raise questions, and explore potential implications of the presentations and discussions on citizenship. Finally, Prof. Elisio Macamo offered a reflective conclusion of the two days, synthesizing key points, highlighting themes, and offering avenues for future research or action in the realm of citizenship studies.





Later in the evening there was a public lecture "Genealogies of African Studies in Germany: An intersectional critique" delivered by Dr. Serawit B. Debele, as a part of the ALMA Lecture Series. In her lecture, Debele engaged in reflections based on ongoing archival research at selected German universities with a long tradition in African Studies.

The workshop series provided diverse insights into the complex relationships between citizenship, violence, inclusion, politics, and human rights and functioned to promote discourse on these issues between all who attended.



Report and photos from Zeynep Senbabaoglu