Editor’s Note

This is the first edition of the Africa third-sector researchers network newsletter (Winter on the African continent) highlighting the critical scholarly and activist work being undertaken in our sector in a post-pandemic context.

The African continent has been severely impacted on by Covid-19 and the third sector has played a pivotal role as front-line responders and as defenders of human rights during the pandemic. A 2020 global civil society alliance CIVICUS report documents the rapid civil society response – to fill gaps left by states and businesses: ‘civil society met needs, defended rights and forged new paths for civic action’ (CIVICUS, 2020:4). African scholars and activists further grapple with their various development challenges which fuel debates centred on social justice and social change, decolonising African pedagogies and research and strengthening democracies and the civic space.

Conferences

Scholarly work in this area is critically highlighted on a number of research platforms.

Among these is the recent International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) 15th international conference that just took place in Montreal, Canada from 12 -15 July 2022. This space is where established as well as early career researchers and scholars come together to present their research, engage with their peers and build critical networks. Among the presentations for this year’s conference is ‘Inspiration from the Global South: Decolonised Methodologies and Engaged Research’ – the full conference schedule can be accessed here: https://www.istr.org/page/2022. Members can log in to download the papers presented and will soon be able to watch the conference videos.

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1 Shauna Mottiar is Associate Professor of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban South Africa where she directs the Centre for Civil Society. She is an ISTR member and currently serves on the ISTR Publications Committee.
The Africa Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) biennial conference titled: ‘Diaspora Remittance Flows: Restitution, Culture and Capital’ will be taking place from 31 August – 4 September 2022 and is an innovative event which seeks to harness the global two-year involvement with online communications and physical engagement. This conference will enable research colleagues in Africa (Ibadan, Nigeria and Nairobi, Kenya) to be part of the research conversation at the 29th ASAUK biennial conference, via the zoom media platform. The event will also be running a smaller traditional in-person conference in Liverpool addressing this and other ASAUK member-determined themes. Details can be accessed here: https://www.asauk.net/2022-conference/

The Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa is hosting the African Philanthropy Academic Conference on 2 August 2022 which will focus on emerging trends in philanthropy, how stakeholders can navigate the new terrain, while informing policy for better practice in Africa. The conference themes include: Contributions of CSOs/NGOs and Social Enterprises to African Economies; Community Gifting/Philanthropy – forms, shapes, and trends in community giving and their contribution to development in Africa; Technology, cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and philanthropy and Decolonizing philanthropy. Conference details can be accessed here: https://www.istr.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1645218 This event is scheduled in advance of The African Philanthropy Conference, an annual gathering of the continent’s leading philanthropic institutions. It is a platform for sharing of experiences, collective reflection, as well as the curation and development of philanthropic and social investment practices of the continent’s people and partners. The 3rd African Philanthropy Conference will be hosted with the objective of addressing system changes that are required in philanthropy in the new normal especially, as these changes relate to the continent’s institutions, policies and practices. Simultaneous interpretation will be available in English, Portuguese and French.

The East-Africa Philanthropy Network and Strathmore University in Kenya are hosting a Conference called Resilient Urban Communities, 5th – 8th December 2022, which includes a PhD Seminar and Early Research Career Seminar. The culmination of the three days shall be one-day Conference designed to showcase the research results currently undertaken as collaborative African-German project. The programme focuses on social enterprises (SEs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs) as subsidiary social service providers and vehicles for participation and integration in African mega cities that contribute to the resilience of urban communities. Organizations of the civil society or development space, such as social enterprises (SEs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs) are important players in the labour market of African economies. Abstracts due August 3. More information available: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.istr.org/resource/resmgr/calls/ruccallforpapers.pdf

The recent University of Cape Town, South Africa African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) conference on the theme ‘Africa and the Human – New Imaginaries’ was held on 11-16 April 2022. It interrogated the question of the human at this time of global existential crises provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the paradoxical undermining and re-centring of science in tackling global challenges, the collapse of postmodernism’s promises and its assurances of equality, social justice and the end of histories of violence, discrimination, and poverty. Selected outputs from the conference will be published in the HUMA-ASAA “Encounters”
series – more information can be accessed here: https://2022conference.as-aa.org/about/conference-theme/

Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda is hosting the International Humanities Conference from 22-26 August 2022 with a focus on ‘Knowledge Revolutions and Practices - Area, Cultural and Global Studies’. Among the themes are: whether the Area Studies revolution enabled the self-understanding and determination of the subaltern - formerly colonized ‘Areas’ - or did it entrench the civilizational project of the West? Also: the history of academic disciplines in Universities in Africa and beyond - what has shaped the trajectory of specific disciplines and, how far has the decolonization of disciplines moved or how much hybridity is there? Conference details can be accessed here: https://chuss.mak.ac.ug/cic2022/docs/CHUSS_International_Conference_2022_Call_for_Abstracts_Ext.pdf

Also on this theme, the University of Ile-Ife, Nigeria is holding an international conference on Decolonising the Humanities in the African Academy. The conference will take place from 7-10 August 2022 and will explore the idea of ‘arrested decolonisation’ and ‘decolonising the mind’ in Africa reflecting on resonances with Latin America. Conference details can be accessed here: https://networks.hnet.org/node/73374/announcements/9742976/international-conference-decolonising-humanities-african

Seminar Series

Critical platforms for scholarly and activist or practitioner engagement and collaboration are discussion and debate taking place in seminar series spaces. These platforms have been extended beyond borders and the physical space with digital options such as Zoom.

This is reflected in the seminar series at the Gerhart Centre for Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Responsible Business at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. The series recently held seminars on the topic of COP 17 and the Role of African Universities as well as on Development Practice Debates. Upcoming seminars and seminar recordings can be found here: https://business.aucegypt.edu/research/centers/gerhart/webinars

The Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa runs various special series on #BlackLivesMatter, Climate Justice and the State of Civil Society. Upcoming special series for 2022 include Social Campaigns for Social Justice and Shrinking Spaces of Civil Society. Seminars and recordings can be accessed via the Centre’s YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3rqEafZg76dbSOGta-IgnQ

The Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden runs a regular seminar series with the aim of developing and deepening the understanding of social movements, resistance and social change. Seminar information can be accessed here: https://www.gu.se/en/socav/seminars-on-civil-society-social-movements-and-resistance-research

Chatham House in partnership with the SNF Dialogues is convening a discussion on: ‘Social Media, Social Movements and Political Change’ on 6 July 2022 which will reflect the value of
social media to social movements and the effects of such digital movements on policymakers. The SNF Dialogues, an initiative of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), are a series of monthly discussions whose goal is to foster the exchange of ideas, inspire a new way of thinking and acting, and encourage and elevate public discourse across geographic boundaries. More information about the Dialogues can be accessed here: https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/special-event/snf-dialogues-social-media-social-movements-and-political-change

**Theory and Praxis**

Linking theory with praxis are initiatives such as the critical **Atlantic Fellows programmes** which span the globe, and offer change-makers, policymakers, researchers, activists, movement-builders and social impactors from around the world an opportunity to train, network and build communities dedicated to social change. Programmes include: the London School of Economics programme for Social and Economic Equity, the Dublin and San Francisco-based Equity in Brain Health, the Racial Equity in New York and Johannesburg, the Social Equity in Melbourne, and three Health Equity programs: U.S. and Global in Washington, D.C., South Africa, in Cape Town and Southeast Asia in Bangkok. Applications for the London School of Economics programme for Social and Economic Equity 2023-2024 open in August 2022 more information can be accessed here: https://www.lse.ac.uk/International-Inequalities/Atlantic-Fellows-programme

**CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

The Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance is calling for expressions of interest for a course entitled **Democratic Governance: Re-Imagining the State and Civil Society** to be held in Cape Town in September 2022:

**Democratic Governance: Re-Imagining the State and Civil Society**

**Executive Short Course**

**Date:** September 2022

**Venue:** Cape Town, South Africa

As part of the **Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance**'s thematic focus on **Democratic Governance**, an executive course will be convened on: **Democratic Governance: Re-Imagining the State and Civil Society**. The course will be delivered as a 5-day, face-to-face, residential learning engagement, hosted in Cape Town, South Africa.
The course will examine both the theoretical and practical challenges of building democratic governance and vibrant civil societies in order to construct national public spheres based more on consent and legitimacy than force and repression. The programme will draw on a combination of academic literature, policy documents and the praxis of case studies.

This specific training package comprises:

- **Formal learning**: The formal learning comprises lectures which will engage students with the challenges of building state legitimacy and broader civic spaces, within the context and limits of both national and global geo-political challenges.

- **Case Studies**: The case studies will aim to develop the theoretical and political concepts outlined in the lectures through country studies. It will expose participants to lessons learnt, successes and failures, from across the African continent.

- **Implementation Hubs**: The discussions in the implementation hubs will provide participants with an opportunity to practically apply a tool to an existing challenge/idea, thereby broadening their skills. The implementation hubs will focus on challenges facing civil society groups in areas such as, xenophobia, the climate and environmental crisis, and global pandemics.

**Target audience:**
If you are a civil society activist interested in broadening your understanding of democratic governance, reflecting on the complex challenges currently facing society, and an opportunity to forge new partnerships that will assist you in reimagining strategies for addressing the challenges in your context of work to make a meaningful impact, this course is for you. For queries, please contact: Veleska.maphike@uct.ac.za

**Book Series – Journal Articles**

In concluding this newsletter are selected, books and recent abstracts from journals focused on civil society, philanthropy and social movements which are relevant to African scholars and activists working in the third sector.
# ISTR Springer Book Series: Non-Profit and Civil Society Series 20022:

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<th>The Power of Morality in Movements</th>
<th>Accounting for the Varieties of Volunteering</th>
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<td>Civic Engagement in Climate Justice, Human Rights, and Democracy</td>
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<th>Civil Society: Concepts, Challenges, Contexts</th>
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Selected Journal Abstracts

Looking Ahead to Voluntas’ Contribution to Research on Civil Society
Fredrik Andersson, Susan Appe, Galia Chimak
VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
volume 33, pages 215–216 (2022)

ABSTRACT: Ever since its inception, the ambition of the editors of Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations has been to offer a forum for the publication of state-of-the-art research about civil society and nonprofit organizations worldwide. We want to thank the immediate former editors of Voluntas, Taco Brandsen and Ruth Simsa, whose driven commitment to make the journal a resource for researchers and practitioners from all over the globe, resulting in an upward tendency now with publications from authors from regions all over the world. The continuity and institutional memory of leading the journal is supported by Susan Appe, who has served as co-editor-in-chief since 2021 and continues.

As each new editorial team has come to learn, working in an interdisciplinary field that invites contributions from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives presents a practical challenge as much as an opportunity to allow dialogue to develop among seemingly disparate fields of inquiry. Yet our team’s ambition is indeed for Voluntas to bridge parallel research universes and keep the forum open for colleagues representing various disciplines and different geographical regions alike. Voluntas’ interdisciplinarity and its internationalness are two of the journal’s strengths.

Which Voluntary Organizations Function as Schools of Democracy? Civic Engagement in Voluntary Organizations and Political Participation
Cheon Lee
VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
volume 33, pages 242–255 (2022)

ABSTRACT: Voluntary organizations have been praised as “schools of democracy” that promote citizens’ political participation. The neo-Tocquevillian approach argues that civic engagement in voluntary organizations facilitates higher levels of political participation. However, empirical studies on the theory have been inconclusive. One possible reason for this is the heterogeneity of voluntary organizations and of political participation. This paper explores the relationship between the civic engagement and political participation of U.S. respondents to the World Values Survey. The results show that only certain types of voluntary organizations facilitate certain types of political participation. Voluntary organizations that pursue social missions are more likely to facilitate political participation. Active civic engagement is more strongly associated with political participation, but passive civic engagement can also promote political participation in some organizations.

How Funding of Non-profit Social Organizations Affects the Number of Volunteers
Mads Clausen
VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
volume 33, pages 362–373 (2022)
ABSTRACT: In recent decades, significant changes have occurred to how charities and non-profit organizations are funded. However, only limited research has considered how the new financial landscape affects the work being carried out by these organizations. This article presents a quantitative analysis of the relationship between financing and the number of volunteers. The data material consists of panel data on revenue streams to nationwide, social, non-profit organizations in Denmark. The analysis reveals a strong, positive relationship between both value-driven general revenues and the organizations' equity in relation to the number of volunteers. Conversely, targeted and means-driven investments do not have any significant correlation with the number of volunteers. Overall, the findings point to the fact that more volunteers can be attracted through forms of financing that strengthen the stability and organizational capacity of an organization as well as its ability to independently organize the work to be done.

Civicness in exile: The solidarities and struggles of South Sudanese refugees in Cairo
Rachel Ibreck and Angelina Seeka
Published online May 2022: https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2022.2068628

ABSTRACT: We explore refugee solidarities and struggles under conditions of extreme political exclusion and violence, based on collaborative ethnography with South Sudanese refugees in Cairo. From the perspective of the refugees, the city is hostile and precarious. They are routinely subject to racism, deprivation, and arbitrary applications of law. At the same time, South Sudanese people have historical roots in Cairo and have generated forms of moral and political order there, shaped by fluctuating relations with each other, the city, and their homeland. We argue that these inconspicuous socio-political structures provide community citizenship at the urban margins. Additionally, we show how refugees strive for legitimate authority, social welfare, and rights in exile, within and beyond these local realms. We label these endeavours ‘civicness’ to capture their situated politics. The refugees’ relations and contentions are distinctive in that they are mostly oriented towards customary and humanitarian authorities, rather than the state; they rely on and encourage quotidian solidarities; and they blend notions of custom with references to human rights and constitutional norms. In this harsh context, South Sudanese refugees deploy civicness to promote survival with dignity and to counteract dehumanizing modes of humanitarian governance.

Transborder Citizenship and Activism: Political Engagement and Resistance in the Somali Environment
Syed Majid
Published online May 2022: https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2022.2068627
ABSTRACT: This article explores Somali transborder/transnational activism through the role of two individual actors, drawing upon their life histories and a selection of initiatives they have been involved in over time. The Somali-populated Horn of Africa provides a highly complex environment for the production of identities, based on its ethno-linguistic heritage, clan affiliations, Islam and their variable state-like affiliations in what is a highly politically fragmented context. These complex and multiple forms of identity incorporate diasporic and non-diasporic actors, all of which complicates notions of citizenship. This article draws upon social and cultural notions of citizenship (rather than legal-bureaucratic) to argue that the agency expressed by the two protagonists is usefully understood as a form of evolving transborder citizenship. Furthermore, the article utilizes the concept of ‘social remittances’ to suggest that the quality of behaviour expressed by our transborder citizens is a form of ‘civicness’, reflective of an engagement with and resistance to the volatile and exclusionary politics of conflict affected contexts. Utilizing life histories enables us to explore how individuals and the networks of which they are part, pursue different strategies, to varying effects, over time and in multiple settings.

STUDYING A MOVEMENT UP CLOSE: GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTALISM
Suzanne Staggenborg
ABSTRACT: Qualitative fieldwork methods, particularly participant observation, afford a close-up look at the dynamics of social movements, allowing researchers to directly observe processes such as strategic decision making and the creation of social movement communities. Extended fieldwork allows us to see how movements and organizations change over time. This article reports on the value of long-term participant observation in a study of grassroots environmentalism in Pittsburgh. I show how the method increases our understanding of how and why people get involved in the movement; the importance of tactics in mobilization; and the challenges of organizing and developing strategy in movement organizations. The study compares organizations that vary by structure and ideology and points to the importance of looking at the multiple and lasting impacts of movement actions and campaigns. The article also notes some of the difficulties of fieldwork, the desirability of team research and multimethod studies, and suggestions for future research.

“BATTLES OVER ISSUES” IN NETWORKED PUBLICS: INVESTIGATING THE DISCURSIVE MOBILIZATION OF THE ANTIFASCIST FRAME ON TWITTER
Elena Pavan and Andrea Rapini
ABSTRACT: In this article we explore the discursive mobilization of movement frames within networked publics—a form of unorganized digital activism through which movement organizations, activists, and citizens politicize ordinary conversations by engaging in adversarial meaning-making dynamics online. Leaning on large-scale semantic network analysis and content analysis, we investigate the mobilization of the frame of antifascism within the conversation that sparked on Twitter after the brutal shooting of a group of African
citizens by an Italian neo-fascist militant in 2018. We pay particular attention to how the discursive mobilization of the frame of antifascism occurs immediately after the shooting and how it evolves particularly in connection with offline protests. Our results shed light on the fluid nature of discursive mobilization patterns which underpin both the identification with the antifascist tradition and attempts to delegitimize this instance of collective action.

Resources

The CIVICUS Monitor – Tracking Civic Space: https://monitor.civicus.org/

The CIVICUS Monitor is a cutting-edge research tool built by civil society. It aims to share reliable, up-to-date data on the state of civil society freedoms in all countries. The interactive world map allows you to access live updates from civil society around the world, track threats to civil society and learn about the ways in which our right to participate is being realised or challenged.

The Afrobarometer – Compiling African Public Attitude Surveys: https://www.afrobarometer.org/

Afrobarometer, a non-profit company limited by guarantee with headquarters in Ghana, is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, the economy, and society. It is a leading source of high-quality data on what Africans are thinking.

About the Newsletter

The Africa Third-Sector Researchers Network Newsletter is an initiative of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR). The first edition is hosted by the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.