



**From the President's Desk, with
Temitope Oriola**

Welcome to the second edition of the relaunched CAAS newsletter. The first edition was well received. I hope that we continue to use the newsletter as a forum to stay in touch and nurture our community of scholars. Plans for and discussions about the format of the 2021 conference are ongoing. I am sure members are looking forward to the conference. The conference planning committee comprising Nicole Haggerty (Western University, Host and co-chair), Philippe Frowd (University of Ottawa, Review chair), Khalid Medani (McGill University, Program chair) and Isaac Bazié (vice president of CAAS and co-chair) is exploring various scenarios vis-à-vis COVID-19 realities. More to follow very soon.

I urge members to stay connected with family, friends, and colleagues in this incredibly isolating period.



DR. TEMITOPE ORIOLA, CAAS PRESIDENT

Kindly continue to observe all protocols stipulated by governing authorities regarding how to prevent the spread of the virus. Wear a mask whenever and wherever physical distancing is impossible. Overall, please, take care of your mental and physical health. Happy reading!

Temitope Oriola
CAAS President

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Faculty Profile

**Dr. Abiodun Salawu,
PhD**



Abiodun is a Professor of Journalism, Communication & Media Studies and the Director of Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA) at North-West University, South Africa. He has scores of scholarly publications in academic journals and books. He has edited/co-edited seven books and authored one.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH DR. SALAWU

Any reflections on pedagogy in your field?

I think journalism, being a professional and practical discipline, requires that students should be exposed to practice and be made to do practical things with the right tools.

What is one unpopular opinion that you have, which always riles people up?

Stubborn integrity!

If you are not a professor, what career path would you have taken?

If not in academia, I would have ended up in journalism practice.

What are your research interests?

My research interest encompasses African

Language Media, Journalism and Media Studies, Development Communication, Digital Media, and Critical Media Studies.

What is your advice to young researchers regarding what you learned the hard way?

I would advise young graduate students to be circumspect about their choice of journals and publishers for publication. But, at times, you cannot know beyond your environment.

What would you typically do on a day you want to take your mind off (academic) work?

I love watching football matches on television.





Postdoc Profile

Dr. Christopher Webb, PhD

Webb is a SSHRC post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics. He has a PhD in Human Geography from the University of Toronto, and an MA in Development Studies. His research is published in the *Review of African Political Economy*, *Area, Environment and Planning D, Society & Space*, the *Global Labour Journal*, and the *Journal of Peasant Studies*. He often contributes to the popular site "Africa Is A Country."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH DR. WEBB

What is your research interest?

My research examines how young people navigate urban inequalities in South African cities, specifically how they move across divided urban landscapes in order to access education and employment opportunities. My research has also analyzed emergent youth politics in South Africa, specifically recent waves of student protest as well as contestations around services, land and housing. I'm currently working on a new research

project that examines the relationship between cash transfer programs and technologies of financial inclusion across Southern Africa, an issue that has gained new importance and meaning in the pandemic era.

Do you have any reflections on pedagogy in your field?

I primarily teach urban and development studies. My approach to both of these subjects is not to approach Africa as an 'add on' or a case study, but central to how we

understand universal issues like

"there is a need to see Africa itself as a source of theory and explanation for global events rather than the other way around"

livelihoods, work, and urban change. As the Comaroffs have noted, there's a need to see Africa itself as a source of theory and explanation for global events rather than the other way (cont. on next page)

Postdoc Profile: Christopher Webb, PhD, cont.

(cont. from previous page) around. This is in line with my aim to expose students to the rich legacy of critical thought and radical politics from across Africa and the diaspora. In an era when decolonization is such an academic buzzword in North America, there's much to learn from, as Cabral put it, by returning to the source and grappling with the messy politics of the decolonial era in Africa and its aftermath.

“[I] aim to expose students to the rich legacy of critical thought and radical politics from across Africa and the diaspora”

If you were not a professor, then what career path would you take?

In my previous (work) life, I was a journalist, which is something I'd gladly return to.

What would you typically do on a day you want to take your mind off (academic) work?

Like many others, the pandemic has made it difficult (for me) to focus on writing or research for long periods. I've been doing a lot of running, cooking and baking, as well as staying in touch with friends

and family members back home in South Africa.

Any warm memories about Africa you would like to share?

I've been thinking a great deal about mobilities in African cities. Livelihoods in African cities are heavily dependent on being able to access resources, connections, and opportunities on a daily basis - what AbdouMaliq Simone has described as 'people as infrastructure'. I've been thinking a great deal about how these mobilities have been affected by the lockdown. This has made me think back on the sensory experiences of travelling by minibus taxi along Cape Town's main road during rush hour. This can be a harrowing experience, the rules of the road don't really apply, but it's one that allows you to get a real sense of how the city moves and survives. It's an experience I hope to return to soon.

How has your understanding of Africa been changed or reinforced since you began your doctoral and postdoctoral studies?

This is a big question that I hardly think I can do much justice to here, but I will say that



my doctoral and post-doctoral research has reaffirmed my belief in the necessity of political struggle to achieve meaningful freedom and development in Africa. Through my work with a range of trade unions and civil society organizations, I've come to recognize the need for scholars to develop long-standing relationships of solidarity with communities struggling against both global capital and corruption. The neoliberal era in Africa has resulted not only in a crisis of livelihoods, but a crackdown on political spaces and freedoms. As critical and engaged scholars, we have a role to play in working with communities and movements to build these spaces and the possibilities that emerge from them.



Student Profile

**Nafisa A. Abdulhamid,
MA**

Nafisa is a PhD Candidate in Political Science at Dalhousie University and a Doctoral Fellow at the Center for the Study of Security and Development. Her research examines the extent to which civilian protection norms have been sustained, adapted, and realized in the African Union Mission in Somalia. She was born and raised in Mombasa, Kenya but moved to Edmonton in 2011 for her postsecondary education. She has a BA (honors) and an MA in Political Science from the University of Alberta. Nafisa hopes to conduct meaningful research that will tell the untold, often forgotten, stories of the Somali people so that one day her findings can positively impact policy changes on humanitarian intervention practices that will actually protect civilians.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH NAFISA

Can you share a warm memory from Africa?

I appreciate the art of storytelling as a way to pass on generational knowledge, as I get to learn more about myself, my people, and my identity.

What are your hobbies?

When outside the work zone, I love re-reading my favorite book, *The House of the Spirits*, while sipping on a hot cup of peppermint tea. In pre-COVID times, I spend half of

the year with my family back in Mombasa. Last fall, while on fieldwork, I took the opportunity to spend the mornings asking my grandfather about his experience in post-colonial

“I appreciate the art of storytelling as a way to pass on generational knowledge”

Kenya, listening to my

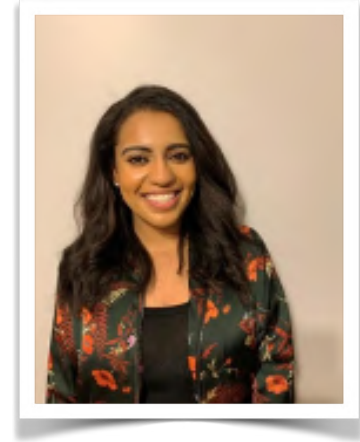
grandmother’s stories of how disputes were resolved back in her day, and baking pastries with my sister every Sunday afternoon.

What is your relationship to Africa?

Despite being professionally rooted in Canada, I maintain strong connections to my community in Mombasa. Before moving to Edmonton, I worked with a local hospital to establish a clinic in the outskirts (*cont. on next page*)

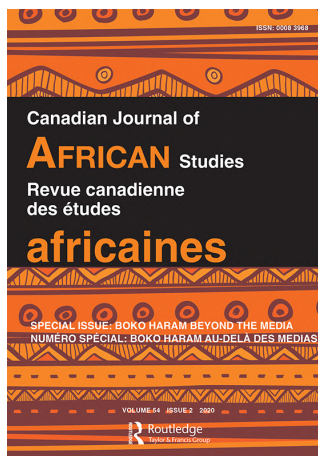
(cont. from previous page) of Mombasa, which administers de-worming medication to primary school students, and educates rural families about the importance of hygiene and proper sanitation. I am a strong advocate for the pursuit of female education in her community back home. I

work closely with local NGOs to survey and deliver primary school textbooks to rural schools around Mombasa city and facilitates workshops for young girls to guide them through college application processes for universities in Kenya and abroad.



Membership News

Article Publication: Vanessa Oliveira, Department of History, Royal Military College of Canada



Vanessa Oliveira (June 2020), “Baskets, Stalls and Shops: Experiences and Strategies of Women in Retail Sales in Nineteenth-Century Luanda,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*: 1-18.

Abstract

Luanda, the capital of Portuguese Angola, had a majority female population in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1850, the port town had experienced a “demographic explosion” reaching 12,565 individuals, 57% of whom

were women. The foodstuffs that fed the population came from the interior and circulated via the baskets, stalls and shops of street vendors and shopkeepers. As in other Atlantic ports, women represented the majority of retail sellers in the Angolan capital, where they peddled on streets and in markets and owned shops. Drawing upon the documentation of the Municipal Council, this study examines experiences and strategies of women in retail sales in mid-nineteenth-century Luanda. Despite their importance in supplying the population of this urban landscape, retail sellers became a target of Portuguese policies aiming to sanitize overseas territories and “civilize” their inhabitants.

[Read Dr. Oliveira’s article, here.](#)

membership news continued on next page →

Membership News

Book Publication: Marc Epprecht,
Department of Global Development
Studies, Queen's
University



Marc Epprecht and
Iain Edwards (2020),
*Working Class
Homosexuality in
South African History:
Voices from the
Archives* (Boulder, CO:
Lynn Rienner
Publishers).

Abstract

The very existence of homosexual working-class men in South Africa has long-been suppressed—or worse. Iain Edwards and Marc Epprecht have recovered representative stories of these men who were previously deemed "outside of history."

Based on a previously unpublished primary source from the early twentieth century, as well as unique interviews with men remembering their lives in the gay settlement of Mkhumbane, this book is meant to inspire both a reimagination of the past and the creation of a more inclusive present and future.

[Read reviews and purchase the book, here.](#)

Report Publication: Open African
Innovation Research



Open African
Innovation
Research (Open
AIR) (2020),
*Scaling
Innovation: How
Open
Collaborative
Models Help Scale
Africa's
Knowledge-based
Enterprises* (Cape
Town and Ottawa: Open AIR Network).

Open African Innovation Research (Open AIR) recently published *Scaling Innovation: How Open Collaborative Models Help Scale Africa's Knowledge-Based Enterprises*. This report is culmination of more than five years of research, drawing from more than 20 case studies of open, collaborative innovation in Africa. This report, draws on research conducted thanks to a SSHRC Partnership Grant in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, and South Africa. Open AIR is also funded by IDRC and Universities Canada.

*summary report and membership news
continued on next page →*

Membership News

Summary Report

Global discussions often repeat the need for African businesses to “scale-up” in order for the continent to experience rapid economic growth that is truly “homegrown.” This is especially the case for knowledge-based businesses, which are essential in the modern global economy. Clarity as to what is meant by scaling-up and how African businesses can and should do this, however, is often lacking. Open AIR has identified numerous dimensions of, and approaches to, enterprise-scaling.

The report shows there are four scaling “archetypes” that are frequently present in African knowledge-based enterprises and then gives detailed accounts and research findings from more than 20 case studies. These case studies reflect the range of knowledge-based businesses that are already present across the continent: from footwear and textile enterprises in informal-sector clusters in Addis Ababa; to maker communities and FabLabs in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya, and South Africa; to vanilla-growers in Mukono District, Uganda; and Nigeria’s Nollywood film industry.

The report finds that there are clear challenges African enterprises face when trying to scale. In addition, African enterprises’ knowledge governance systems are often intertwined with their approaches

to scaling, impacting these enterprises’ abilities to be socially and economically inclusive. Such research is critical for the continent’s innovators, small enterprises, researchers, academics, private-sector actors, civil society players, and policymakers.

[Read the full report, here.](#)

Grant Recipient: Sarah Kratz-Lavigne, Sociology Department, Universität Bayreuth



Sarah Kratz-Lavigne, Abdoulaye Gueye, Nadège Compaoré, and Meredith Terretta, “Unwelcoming Canada: How Visa Issuance Affects Canada-Africa Research Collaboration,” Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Development Grant

A campaign on visa refusals to African scholars wanting to come to Canada originally began within the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) as an advocacy campaign, launched after it was observed that each year, would-be participants at the CAAS (*cont. on next page*)

(cont. from previous page) conference were refused visas to come to Canada, and therefore had to pull out of accepted presentations. The campaign, launched with CAAS exec support, was a committee effort including Dr. Sarah Katz-Lavigne from the University of Bayreuth/CAAS, Dr. Meredith Terretta from the University of Ottawa/CAAS, Belinda Dodson of the Canadian Journal of African Studies, Betty Plewes of the McLeod Group, Alex Neve of Amnesty International Canada, and others. CAAS produced a report of the findings after one year ([see here](#)), which would not have been possible without the testimonials and survey responses of a number of African scholars who generously gave their time and shared their difficult experiences in this regard.

[Read the full description, here.](#)

Job Opportunities

Media, Communication and Public Engagement

Assistant Professor (tenure-track)

Location: Simon Fraser University, BC

Date posted: 30 September 2020

Advertised until: 29 November 2020

[See full posting, here.](#)

Psychology

Assistant Professor (social/personality psychology)

Location: York University, Ontario

Date posted: 2 October 2020

Advertised until: 1 November 2020

[See full posting, here.](#)

Politics

Assistant/Associate Professor (Black politics)

Location: York University, Ontario

Date posted: 2 October 2020

Advertised until: 1 December 2020

[See full posting, here.](#)

History

Assistant/Associate Professor (African-American history)

Location: York University, Ontario

Date posted: 28 September 2020

Advertised until: 11 November 2020

[See full posting, here.](#)

The CAAS newsletter team wants to hear from you!

We want to share the worlds of our members!

CONTENT WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

- Faculty profile participants
- Student profile participants
- Member news: something good or important that has happened in your personal or professional life that you would like to share with other CAAS members. Did you happen upon a strange discovery? Or recently publish something? Perhaps you went on a great vacation and made a friend. Let us know!
- Academic news: Is there a CFP you would like to share, or an academic opportunity? E-mail us!
- News from across Africa: we want the good, the bad, the beautiful, the problematic. Has something happened somewhere in Africa that you think is worth sharing? Perhaps an important political event or just a happy story? Share with us!

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