



MIASA-PAPA Conference

Sustainable Governance in Africa: The Usefulness of the Concept of Crisis

7-9 November 2024, Point Sud, Bamako, Mali

The Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana in Accra and the Pilot African Postgraduate Academy (PAPA) at Point Sud, are organizing, in collaboration with the Goethe University in Frankfurt (Germany), an international colloquium on the concept of crisis, widely used in African studies, from 7 to 9 November 2024 at the Point Sud, The Centre for research on local knowledge in Bamako (Mali). The conference is part of an epistemological approach that involves questioning the relevance of concepts developed elsewhere, but with which African researchers are constantly called upon to work to analyze, describe and even imagine their environment.

In the human and social sciences, there is a general tendency to describe certain phenomena/realities using the concept of crisis. However, it is important to distinguish between the everyday use of the concept, in politics or the media, and its scientific development. The scientific approach presupposes an analytical definition that enables phenomena to be differentiated clearly so that the empirical elements that make them up can be better identified. Thus, a crisis describes a situation in which a decision has to be taken.

This raises several questions:

- In what sense, for example, can we speak of a security crisis in the light of current events in Africa, marked by the proliferation of armed terrorist groups, the resurgence of coups d'état, and the emergence of self-defense groups?
- What is the relevance of the concept of crisis in the quest to understand these various manifestations in African societies?
- Are we not running the risk of misunderstanding these manifestations in their entirety if we do not judiciously define the concept of crisis?

By re-examining the various uses of the concept, we aim to gain a better understanding of the phenomena and, possibly, to enrich the conceptual and analytical tools used by researchers in describing them. The aim is to compare and articulate the discursive level with the analytical level

of the concept, to find the most appropriate way of approaching and analyzing the problem. We will discuss the relationship between its everyday use, including in politics and the media, and its scientific elaboration, to assess its relevance, update it, and possibly readjust its uses.

As part of this meeting, we are inviting researchers to submit, by 30 May 2024 at the latest, a proposal for a 250-word paper (1,585 characters including spaces) on the relevance, contribution, or usefulness of the concept through its added value in describing political, security or economic realities.

Four lines of research are thus envisaged from a multi-disciplinary perspective and may, as far as possible, combine the historical and gender dimensions:

Axis 1: *The meaning of the concept of crisis and its relevance to the study of African societies*

Meaning of the concept of crisis and its relevance to the study of African societies: authors are invited here to re-examine the concept through a critique in African contexts, but also to explore its contribution to the understanding of current social dynamics in Africa. Attention will be paid to people's experiences, the interplay of actors, and the distance researchers may or may not have taken from the use of this concept.

Axis 2: *Governance issues, social movements and geopolitical reconfiguration*

Problems of governance, social movements, and geopolitical reconfiguration: this axis examines the institutional frameworks that define political regimes and modes of governance, and popular protests in African contexts. We study how these internal dynamics resonate with geopolitical issues. To what extent can the phenomena observed be analyzed as part of a crisis?

Axis 3: *Actions by armed terrorist groups, development of self-defence and coups d'état*

Actions of armed terrorist groups, development of self-defense and coups d'état: we analyze the new contexts in which terrorist violence is developing, threats to territorial integrity and the security of populations, the resurgence of coups d'état and the proliferation of armed groups.

Axis 4: *Economic crisis(es) and market challenges*

Economic crisis(es) and market issues: we will examine the concept of crisis in the age of neoliberalism.

Terms of Submission

Proposals for papers of 500 words and a brief academic CV (maximum 4 pages) must be sent no later than 30 May 2024 to the following address: papa.miasa.conference2024@gmail.com. They should indicate the chosen theme and the title of the paper, and include a summary setting out the context, issues and methodological approach. A biographical note (1 page) indicating the author's discipline and institutional affiliation is also required. Applications must be submitted in PDF format. Successful papers are expected to be published, and a call for papers may be issued following the conference.

Practical aspects

All travel and subsistence expenses for speakers whose proposals have been accepted will be covered by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Early career researchers are particularly encouraged to propose a paper. Proposals may be submitted in English or French.

Timetable

- 30 April 2024: launch of the call for proposals
- 30 May 2024: deadline for submitting proposals for papers
- 30 June 2024: selection of proposals and return to authors
- 30 September 2024: submission of papers
- 7 - 9 November 2024: conference in Bamako

Scientific committee (responsible for the selection of the candidates)

- Prof. Mamadou Diawara, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany and Co-Director of MIASA, Accra, Ghana
- Prof. Elisio Macamo, University of Basel, Switzerland
- Prof. Justin Bisanswa, University of Laval, Canada
- Gérard Amougou, University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon
- Prof. Khaoula Matri, University of Sousse, Tunisia
- Zakaria Soré, Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, Burkina Faso
- Lamine Savané, University of Ségou, Mali
- Rose De Lima Esoh, Université Alassane Ouattara de Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire
- Abdoulaye Imourou, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
- Fabert Mensah, Omar Bongo University, Gabon

In case of questions, please contact:

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