Swiss Researching Africa Days (Bern, 26-27.10.2018)

Call for papers / Appel à contributions

The Swiss Society for African Studies invites paper propositions for the upcoming 5th Swiss Researching Africa Days. The objective of this biannual convention is to promote the exchange among the community of researchers working on Africa in Switzerland. Panels typically integrate young and established scholars (Master, PhDs, postdocs, professors). Please submit your proposal before **30 June 2018** directly to the convenors of the respective panel.

*La Société suisse d'études africaines invite les acteurs de la scène africaniste en Suisse de proposer des contributions à la 4ième édition des Journées suisses d'études africaines. Ces journées biannuelles visent à promouvoir l'échange entre chercheurs de tous niveaux (master, doctorats, post-docs, professeurs). Nous vous prions de soumettre vos propositions jusqu'au **30 juin 2018** directement aux personnes responsables pour le panel respectif.*

Call for posters / Appel à proposition de posters

One of our aims is to present on-going or recently finished PhD research on a topic related to Africa at Swiss universities. The organizers invite researchers to submit a scientific poster (size A0, vertical orientation) on their PhD research for the Swiss Researching Africa Days. There will be time slots for the presentation of the posters during the conference. The posters will also be compiled as an electronic reader to be published on the website of the Swiss Society for African Studies. Please submit proposals for posters (pdf) to Veit Arlt (veit.arlt@unibas.ch). The deadline for submission is 31 July 2018. The organizing committee will decide on the acceptance of submitted poster proposals and confirm by 15 August 2018.

En outre, la SSEA souhaite dresser un inventaire des thèses de doctorat en cours dans le champ des études africaines en Suisse. Pour cela, nous invitons toutes les doctorantes et tous les doctorants ayant une thèse en cours dans une université suisse, ou ayant soutenu une thèse en 2015 ou 2016, à préparer un poster (A0, orientation portrait) et le présenter lors des journées. Un moment sera réservé pour que les participants puissent prendre connaissance des posters et discuter avec leurs auteurs. Tous les posters seront ensuite publiés (en ligne) dans une petite brochure. Les propositions de posters (PDF) sont à envoyer par e-mail jusqu'au 31 juillet 2018 à Veit Arlt (veit.arlt@unibas.ch). La sélection se fera d'ici le 15 aout 2018.

For the Board of the SSAS/SGAS/SSEA: Didier Péclard, Tobias Haller, Carole Ammann and Veit Arlt

Panel 1:   Knowing Justice: The Politics of Knowledge Production for, and of, Peace and Justice in Africa

Briony Jones, University of Warwick and swisspeace
Ulrike Luehe, swisspeace and University of Basel
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Transitional justice, like other peacebuilding endeavours, strives to create change in the world and to produce knowledge that is useful (Goetschel and Pfluger 2014: 55). But the politics of how this knowledge is produced, shared and rendered legitimate depends upon the relationships between different epistemic communities, the way in which transitional justice has developed as a field, and the myriad contexts in which it is embedded at local, national and international levels. In particular, forms of 'expert' knowledge tend to be legal, foreign and based on models to be replicated elsewhere (Jones 2015). Work on epistemic communities of peacebuilding (Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu 2014) which operate as "sites of a constant struggle over how to define which qualifies as valid knowledge" (Bush and Duggan 2014: 233) can be usefully brought to bear on transitional justice, speaking to current debates in the literature on positionality, justice 'from below', marginalisation and knowledge imperialism.

This panel, organised by team members of the project *Knowledge for Peace. Understanding Research, Policy, Practice Synergies* (www.knowledge-for-peace.org) invites papers which speak to the central concern of the politics of knowledge production, covering topics which may include but are certainly not limited to:
- Research, policy, practice interactions.
- Knowledge production by a particular actor or set of actors e.g. civil society or the government.
- Marginalisation of particular perspectives on peace and justice.
- Contestation of peace and justice initiatives.
- Explorations of what counts as knowledge.
- Intervention and knowledge production.

We look forward to contributions from early career and more senior colleagues and varied case studies or theoretical work.

Panel 2:   Disentangling the knot: illuminating the dynamics between globalised land and local well-being in Africa

Jorge C. Llopis, Julie G. Zähringer & Flurina Schneider, Centre for Development and Environment, and Institute of Geography, University of Bern
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Land in the African continent is at the centre of struggles and tensions, not the less because of its pivotal role between often colliding demands from actors across scales. Spanning from the direct benefits harnessed by local populations, to constituting a source of revenues to regional and national state institutions, or providing multiple environmental goods and services globally, overlapping interests focusing on land frequently render it an object of conflict, in occasions with unequal outcomes for diverse stakeholders. Several developments connecting local realities with

broader scales are witnessed currently in Africa around land. Among others, large-scale foreign investments in agricultural land, internationally-led implementation of protected areas for biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration objectives, or booming demand for raw materials and other commodities provide prominent examples. Whilst the outcomes of some of these dynamics have been already explored to some extent through institutional governance or value chain analysis, understanding of how these multi-scalar processes might affect the well-being of local populations still is insufficient. Particularly appalling is the paucity of studies rooted in local interpretations of well-being, good life, quality of life, or other more context-specific related concepts.

With the goal of filling some of these gaps, this panel welcomes proposals presenting on-going or recently completed research exploring the relationship between land and human well-being in Africa in a wide sense, especially those engaging with a locally-rooted understanding of the concept and connected ideas. Students and early-career scholars from African Studies and related disciplines, as Anthropology, Geography, Political Sciences, or Development Studies are encouraged to participate, with the purported objective to lay interdisciplinary connections between scholars working on these issues in Switzerland.

Panel 3: Environmental justice and land management practices in Africa

Sébastien Boillat, Patrick Bottazzi & Chinwe Ifejika Speranza, Institute of Geography, University of Bern
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Background
The concept of environmental justice has spread to cover a very wide array of equity concerns related with environmental issues. It has also expanded spatially to address the global dimensions of environmental injustices (Schlosberg 2013). With a large proportion of people depending on local natural resources, and facing the various challenges of desertification, neoliberal policies and food insecurity, Africa is particularly vulnerable to global environmental change while least contributing to it. This observation has motivated civil society organizations to launch campaigns for environmental and climate justice, urging industrialized countries to reduce their emissions, support responsible agricultural investment but also asking African countries to prioritize climate change adaptation programmes (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2008, Tokar 2014). In this context, international organizations and development actors are increasingly using environmental justice as a prominent framing to support actions in rural Africa, such as adaptation to and mitigation of climate change (Black 2016). Vulnerable rural populations are likely to be involved in land-based adaptation and mitigation actions such as climate-smart villages, climate-smart agriculture, conservation agriculture and agroecology (Tittonell et al. 2012, Nana et al. 2015, Timmermann and Felix 2015) that mainly focus on changing land management practices. These changes are likely to be distributed in an unequal way depending on political will, international support and local adoption. They are also likely to have differentiated impacts on people and communities, creating resilience for some but with the risk of adding burdens on others. To understand these impacts, land management practices and their change have to be understood as embedded into a wider context of social-ecological ties and combined effects of different aspects of global environmental change.

Objectives and Research Questions

This panel has the objective to discuss the extent to which various initiatives or scenarios of land management are articulated to environmental justice in Africa. We welcome panelists to provide contributions linked to the following research questions:

- To what extent can change in land management practice deliver environmental/climate justice?
- What does shifting to climate smart land management practices mean in terms of distribution, participation and recognition of costs and benefits?
- How can land conditions be understood as a result of the interplay between climate change, local practices and policies?
- How can relationships between human well-being and global environmental issues be addressed at multiple scales?
- How are different models of land management practices related to socio-economics and environmental inequalities?
- How do environmental and climate change affect local land users access to sustainable livelihoods?

What are the effects of neoliberal policies (such as those favoring large-scale agriculture investment, trade agreement, etc.) on local land users' rights to environmental or climate justice?

Panel 4: ´Brokers´ and interpreters within the judicial and human rights fields in West Africa
« Courtiers » et interprètes dans les champs de la justice et des droits de l´Homme en Afrique de l´Ouest

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Natalie Tarr, Center for African Studies (CASB), University of Basel
Gabriele Slezak, Department of African Studies, University of Vienna
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This interdisciplinary panel invites inquiries into the pivotal roles played by interpreters (conceptual and linguistic) and intermediaries in judicial systems, in human rights NGOs, and organizations in contemporary West Africa. Building on the concepts of ´brokers of development´ and ´translations´, this panel seeks to explore how individuals with specific and specialized knowledge of, for example, (inter)national law, human rights, and/or various customary and religious law systems, reach a position of intermediary between the law and the rights end users, civil servants and/or development community. They do so by rendering their intervention as intermediaries necessary – to various degrees of success – to state representatives, NGOs, and development agencies as well as to the persons they would like to represent. The panel is not only interested in understanding how these ´brokers´ reach this position through a concatenation of formal and informal practices, it also seeks to analyse the way they ´translate´ meaning from one field to another and the challenges that can arise from this process of ´translating´ law or rights.

The panel invites contributions, particularly empirical studies, from various disciplines such as anthropology, ethics, geography, history, law, sociolinguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology and socio---legal studies. The aim is to create an interdisciplinary dialogue on the topics of law and human rights ´translation´ and the role of interpreters and intermediaries in the process.

Ce panel interdisciplinaire invite à l´étude des rôles joués par les interprètes (tant d´un point de vue conceptuel que linguistique) et par les intermédiaires dans les divers systèmes judiciaires, les tribunaux à l´échelle nationale ou régionale par exemple, ainsi que dans les ONGs et les autres types d´organisations actives dans le domaine des droits de l´Homme en Afrique de l´Ouest. En s´appuyant sur les concepts de « courtiers en développement » et de « traduction », le panel explorera les façons dont des personnes disposant des connaissances tant des divers cadres légaux – droit (inter)national, droits de l´Homme, droits coutumiers et religieux – que des diverses normes ou pratiques politiques et culturelles représentées en Afrique de l´Ouest, parviennent à s´insérer comme intermédiaires entre les personnes récipiendaires des services de la justice ou de l´État d´une part, et ses représentants ainsi que ceux d´agences de développement d´autre part. Ils y parviennent, à divers degrés de réussite, en se rendant indispensables tant aux yeux des fonctionnaires de l´État, d´ONGs et d´agences de développement qu´aux yeux des populations qu´ils cherchent à représenter. Le panel étudiera autant les stratégies faites de pratiques formelles et informelles déployées par ces « courtiers » pour se rendre d´indispensables intermédiaires, que les « traductions » du sens des lois ou des droits d´un champ à un ou plusieurs autres ainsi que les enjeux apparaissant dans le processus de « traductions ».

Le panel cherche à réunir des études empiriques venant de diverses disciplines comme l´anthropologie, le droit, l´éthique, la géographie, l´histoire, la sociolinguistique, la philosophie, la psychologie, la sociologie et les études sociojuridiques. Le but est de créer un dialogue entre ces branches sur le sujet des « traductions » de lois et de droits de l´Homme et sur la place qu´y occupent les interprètes et d´autres intermédiaires.

Panel 5:   Theorizing African Aesthetics

Fiona Siegenthaler, University of Basel,), Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Columbia University (until August 2018) and Associate Researcher at University of Johannesburg
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In the last three decades, a considerable number of research projects, case studies and publications have contributed to a growing knowledge about both, historical and contemporary African art. The approaches are diverse, especially in terms of their empirical interest and their conceptual basis. Many studies informed by African art history as practiced in the USA have a historiographic impetus and often attempt at theorizing particularities of African aesthetics. Studies focusing on urban – and mostly contemporary – art on the other hand, and perhaps more prominently in European scholarship, often use 'African' as a locational or regional term rather than an aesthetic one. Research in 'urban Africa' for instance has provided a wide range of interesting case studies of creative practice in African cities, but these studies often fail to reflect in a more theoretical manner the aesthetic, philosophical and theoretical particularities of African art practice, especially in urban settings.

Attempts to define particular 'modern' or 'urban' genres were heavily criticized by scholars in the late 1980s and early 1990s for their ethnocentricity. This has resulted in a rather narrow engagement with art theory, firstly because there is a hesitation to impose western concepts on African practices and secondly because most of contemporary art practices are internationally entangled and therefore seem to escape an essentialism in favor of 'global(izing)' aesthetics.

However, this situation leaves us with an important question: What can scholarship in African art

contribute to both, African Studies as regional studies and art theory as a globally relevant discipline that is still perpetuating euro-centric epistemology and art history? How can African art and art scholarship contribute to new and alternative aesthetic theories? How can we develop a deeper understanding of plural epistemologies by theorizing African art? Can the theorization of African art contribute to art theory more generally, for instance with regard to comparative or global studies?

This panel calls for paper contributions from all disciplines with an interest in theorizing African art (archeology, history, art history, social anthropology, cultural studies, philosophy etc.). While case studies are welcome to support an argument, the panel aims at a theoretical engagement with the topic in first place.

Panel 6: Sous le signe du retour : migration et migrance littéraire

Christine Le Quellec Cottier, Université de Lausanne
Mélanie Sampayo Vidal, Université de Berne
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Postulat
Evoquer à l'heure actuelle les récits de migration implique la référence à un vaste corps de textes dont les membres sont fort divers. Le contexte politique international provoque toujours de multiples déplacements d'individus dont l'orientation géographique est bien souvent le Nord, alors qu'il ne faut pas négliger les étapes Sud-Sud impliquant aussi des groupes très nombreux. L'expérience de cette mobilité forcée surgit au détour de nombreux récits de témoignage, faisant état du poids de l'exil et de la migration, d'identités perdues ou à reconquérir. Dans cet univers surgit « l'homme-frontière » (Michel Agier), celui qui ne peut s'installer en territoire connu ou reconnu, celui qui est de passage, devenu une forme en transit obligée de se réinventer à chaque étape de son parcours.

Mais face à l'empreinte d'une réalité vécue coexiste le monde de la fiction qui, depuis de nombreuses années, donne vie à des personnages incarnant une expérience de dépossession, qu'elle soit territoriale, linguistique ou culturelle. Les fictions de la « littérature migrante » ne dépendent pas de l'expérience d'un auteur, mais offrent un cheminement au cœur de l'exil dont le texte est la « topologie » (Simon Harel), l'espace symbolique : « la migrance n'est pas seulement de nature géoculturelle, liée au déplacement d'un territoire à un autre ; elle est aussi et peut-être surtout de nature ontologique et symbolique, puisqu'elle caractérise le déplacement même du Sens et de l'Etre dans l'expérience intime de l'altérité » (Pierre Ouellet). Ainsi, l'on peut considérer que les littératures migrantes désignent des fictions dont l'énonciation thématise la migration (dans sa diversité) en offrant des espaces de déplacement, de hors-lieu ou de l'entre-deux où se négocient des appartenances multiples dont la langue est le médium. Cette littérature met en scène une « migrance du moi » (P. Ouellet) qui s'incarne au sein de personnages aux voix diverses. Il nous importe donc de questionner les formes de ces nouvelles subjectivités qui narrent l'expérience de la perte, du désencrage, en même temps que le discours (ou la création artistique dans sa diversité) construit par sa forme même le refus de la disparition.

Problématique et périodisation
Les littératures mettant en scène la migrance depuis l'Afrique sont foisonnantes – roman, théâtre, poésie – mais il nous paraît intéressant de concentrer la réflexion sur des récits très contemporains

qui semblent offrir un nouveau mouvement : à l'éloignement, à l'effacement dû à l'exil succède la possibilité d'un retour, d'une réinscription dans une topographie ou une topologie :

- quel regard est porté sur le continent africain par les protagonistes qui rentrent ou reviennent ?
- quelles formes prend ce mouvement de « réappropriation » ?
- comment le migrant se perçoit-il lui-même ?

Le verbe « migrare » a une double étymologie : il désigne un *changement de place* mais aussi le fait d'*enfreindre*, de *transgresser*. Avec ce panel, nous souhaitons croiser ces deux options, aussi en accueillant des approches esthétiques (littérature, arts plastiques, photographie, …) et des démarches rendant compte d'expériences vécues, des récits de témoignage. La propre perception de l'énonciateur réel ou fictif – quant à sa relation à des espaces, des cultures et des langues permettra de mettre en perspective de nouveaux discours *de* et *sur* la migration.

Champ linguistique
La réflexion s'est construite à partir du champ francophone subsaharien, mais le panel intègre volontiers des réflexions touchant à d'autres langues et donc d'autres référents culturels.

Panel 7: Dance, Power and Subjectivities in African cities

Alice Aterianus-Owanga, University of Lausanne
Lesley Braun, University of Basel
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Since the colonial era, African cities have been enlivened by a wide spectrum of dance practices and venues, through which African citizens have forged their urban identities as well as their relationships with power. In Dakar, the appropriation of Afro-latin dances has, for example, led to the incorporation of older generational sociabilities (Shain, 2009), while in Cape Town, the appropriation of the same dance and musical genre has been the crucible for a reconstruction of a "coloured" identity, in a context of racial segregation and land displacement (Gibson, 2013; Johnson, 2011). In other contexts across historical periods, dance practices have also been a strong medium to negotiate with different matrices of power, especially for politically marginalized women (White, 2006; Gilman, 2011). Since the 1990s, the appropriation of global dance and music genres, along with the creation of new hybrid popular performances have been a way to forge new modes a recognition and identification for a youth contending with economic crisis and unemployment (Braun, 2014; 2015 Aterianus-Owanga, 2017b, 2017a). In many countries, these practices lead to new pathways of recognition in local spheres, but also sometimes to new routes of migration and transnational connections. In contemporary urban African popular culture, the body now dances in the virtual realm of the Internet where it can be viewed by millions of people. As such, Africans hold a highly visible role as culture creators, or trendsetters—these trends are now being set on a world stage through the Internet, in particular, YouTube.

Despite the potency of dance to illuminate new subjectivities, scholarship has tended to privilege the aural over corporeal responses to music as enacted through dance. Drawing from a variety of ethnographic and historical case studies, this panel proposes to showcase the ways in which dance practices constitute a primary field for the dynamics of identity categories transformations (in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, generation, nation), in colonial and postcolonial African cities. As a

result of its very potency, dance has been viewed as threatening—provoking moral anxiety—thereby invites control, censorship, and surveillance. Through a reflexion of urban popular dance worlds, this panel will attend to the ways in which African popular urban identities have long been created through appropriations and indigenisation of global flows. Foregrounding African dance worlds in emerging research will reveal the long standing "connectedness" of African popular cultures, and the contemporary dynamics of transnational circulations and identifications that occur in and through dance.

Panel 8: Multilingualism and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa: a key to participation and sustainability?

Djouroukoro Diallo, University of Bern
Thomas Bearth, University of Zurich/ African Language Consultancy
Mohmodou Houssouba, University of Basel
Carmen Delgado, University of Geneva
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Africa is known as the continent with the highest average concentration of languages worldwide. Management of multilingualism in matters of governance generally obeys asymmetric rules assigning limited roles to African languages in the face of 'official' languages (French, English etc.) having inherited their 'official' status and their predominance in government at all levels in unbroken continuity from colonial times. But even so, the real role of African languages in governance greatly varies from country to country, and even from setting to setting (village vs. urban). The panel proposes

(i)   to contribute to a better understanding of the typology of situations characterizing communication as part of governance (top-down, bottom-up, etc.) across the continent;

(ii)   to examine the question as to what attested practices of governing taking into account African multilingualism mean
- for the legal or para-legal status of languages involved;
- for participation of speakers in various aspects of governance;

(iii)   to discuss examples and case studies (to be submitted by participants) illustrating multilingual strategies, by contrast with procedures exclusively drawing on official language government communication ;

(iv)   to elucidate the role of language in communicating decisions, in securing adhesion, and in applying strategies of enforcement.

Transversal issues to be kept in mind for discussion and research:

(i)   Recourse to alternative/traditional forms of (democratic or gerontocratic, or mixed forms of) rule often correlates with the alternation between official/national and/or local languages, constituting a challenging and little explored field for investigation;

(ii)   If inclusive language policies and practices favor inclusion and participation of local populations in the processes of governance, and progress in sustainable state- and institution-building - how does this affect socio-economic development? Can Djité's claim be substantiated (2011: IX): "Language is at the nexus of marginalisation and vulnerability. Only through language can we hope to reduce poverty in real terms"?

Panel 9: So what about youth in Africa? Reappraisals after the academic buzz

Joschka Philipps, swisspeace, Bern
Susann Ludwig, Universität Leipzig
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Youth research has been booming like few other topics in the field of African Studies, becoming one of its most productive areas of research. Academics have focused on a variety of issues, ranging from young people's ambiguity as "Makers & Breakers" in politics and popular culture (Honwana & de Boeck 2005; see also Abbink & van Kessel 2005) to their blocked mobility and transitions to adulthood (Honwana 2012; Steuer et. al. 2017; Vigh 2010) to more general inquiries concerning the question of agency and structure in postcolonial settings (Christiansen et. al 2006; Ugor 2013). While nowadays the academic buzz revolving around Africa's youth is arguably fading (Klouwenberg & Butter 2011), none of these issues have lost their relevancy, not least since Africa's youth population continues to grow.

In this context, the present panel investigates the implications and consequences of past and present youth research: its pitfalls and untapped potentials, its innovations and misinterpretations, its significance beyond the academic realm and what it indicates about African Studies. What are, we may ask more specifically, the advantages and disadvantages of overly inclusive social categories and research agendas (Mbembe 1985)? How have 'extraordinary' youth absorbed the academic spotlight (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005)? What have been in retrospect the underlying assumptions and concerns of the African youth debate and what can the latter contribute to broader debates beyond African Studies (Philipps 2018)? Finally, if indeed the innovative potential of the 'youth' concept has been exhausted, what other conceptual avenues are to be traced to study young people and their surroundings, on what empirical, methodological and conceptual foundations (Ludwig 2017)? The panel invites diverse contributions to reassess the youth debate from multiple perspectives, reassemble its insights and ultimately develop new outlooks on a set of phenomena that remain consequential, whether or not academics continue to be enthusiastic about them.

Panel 10: State-Making and State-Breaking in sub-Sahara Africa

Toon Dirkx, swisspeace & University of Basel
Wendyam Lankoandé, swisspeace & University of Basel
Dominik Balthasar, swisspeace & University of Basel
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Allegedly home to 30 out of a total of 49 fragile states in the world (OECD 2015), Africa has summarily been judged to be "undoubtedly plagued by systematic state failure" (Howard 2014). While it is true that the continent has seen many state structures evaporate in large-scale violent conflict, about half of all states in sub-Sahara Africa have neither experienced internal nor intrastate war between 1947 and 2015 (UCDP/PRIO 2015). Consequently, and given that the alleged structural causes of fragility—ranging from arbitrary colonial borders to widespread poverty and inequality—are widely shared among African countries and their respective societies, a major puzzle is how differences in state trajectories in Africa can be explained, and under what conditions it is state-making or state-breaking that prevails?

Seeking to address this conundrum, recent academic debates have centred on concepts such as 'hybrid political orders' (HPOs), and 'political settlements', amongst others. While these frameworks do shed important light on state trajectories in sub-Sahara Africa, it remains unclear what accounts for why some states flourish whilst others perish. Does the answer lie with the institutional set-up, the underlying political economy, or issues of social cohesion and (national) identity? What is the role of violent conflict and non-state (armed) actors in governance and state development? And what theories, concepts, and methods lend themselves to better understanding state trajectories across space and time? This panel invites paper presentations that are dedicated to shedding more light on these and related questions.

Panel 11: Contested Wildlife

Olivier Graefe, University of Fribourg
Antje Schlottmann, University of Frankfurt
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Wildlife and wilderness are increasingly objects of contestations, negotiations and redefinitions. Conservation areas of different setting, ranging from national parks and private game farms to communal conservancies, appear as arenas of militarization, commodification and privatization. Current wildlife management practices are decisive for future habitats and co-habitation, but underlie diverging rules and regulations, do involve (or exclude) different sets of actors and, most importantly, serve different ideas of nature, wildlife and their preservation. As a result, normative ideas of what or who should be preserved interfere with each other. At the same time, these ideas are subject to conditions of situated knowledge structures, distributions of power and, not the least, of non-human agency and material resistance to environmental governance.

In order to understand the struggles for and over present and future wildlife, this panel aims to excavate and disentangle the interplay of imaginations, discourses, regulations and materialities. We welcome theoretical frameworks and conceptual approaches as well as theory-based case studies, which analyze situated complexities of human and non-human interrelation and their implications. We seek to engage in an epistemological conversation about the constitution of wildlife and its future in present nature-society relationships.