BIOGRAPHIES & ABSTRACTS

How to Write about Platformization from Africa Workshop
African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town
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Abdullahi Ali Hassan

Institution: University of Johannesburg
Location: Cape Town/Johannesburg, South Africa
Biography: I obtained a BA in Politics and Development Studies at the University of South Africa (UNISA), a BA Admin (Hons) in Politics from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and an MPhil degree in Urban Studies from the University of Cape Town (UCT). I am currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Johannesburg. My research focuses on transnationalism, the socio-legal and the new technology- how diaspora communities employ socio-legal mechanisms such as customary law and religious jurisprudence to mediate transnational disputes through social media. I worked as a research consultant with the ERC funded research project ConflictNet at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford.

Paper Title: ICT and Xeer Law: Transnational Business Dispute Mediation Among The Somali Communities In South Africa

Abstract: This study examines how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been changing the ways in which business disputes are resolved among the Somali migrant communities in South Africa with xeer law (Somali customary law). Xeer is socio- legal system of logics, which kept social order among Somalis for centuries (Accord, 2017). And it became entrenched during the period of statelessness in Somali after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991 (Abdile, 2012) as the main legal mechanism for justice and order (Stremlau & Osman, 2015). Usually, Somali elders in Somalia (odayaasha or xeerbeegtida) gather under a tree, which is for them a neutral space and a courtroom and mediate disputants with xeer law (Mansur, 2011). This thesis explores how online communication platforms (such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Zoom) are engaging, altering, and/or complementing this tradition by serving as virtual trees for digitally connected Somali diaspora. ICTs have been examined in earlier studies as platforms for migrants to maintain social connections with their communities of origin (Komito, 2011) as well as to participate in political discourses on their homelands (Gagliardone & Stremlau, 2011). When it comes to examining Somalis transnationally, some research has explored how Somalis who migrated to different parts of the world after the collapse of the Somali state maintained their cultural, religious and economic linkages across borders (Kleist, 2008). But one aspect that has been missing in this, is how the relatively low cost of connecting on online media communication platforms made xeer transnational by enabling the Somali diaspora to utilise it as a tool for justice. I will address this significant gap in the literature by exploring how these new communication technologies are changing the entire process of justice- from evidence gathering to prosecution and compensation or punishment. The Somali communities in Johannesburg, South Africa use online communication spaces such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Zoom to mediate transnational business and family disputes with

xeer law. However, this phenomenon and the subsequent Somali migrant legal transnationalism and their underlining logics and patterns have not been studied. To address the gap, this project will investigate how these platforms have been transnationalising the scope of justice seeking among the Somali diaspora in South Africa and both leveraging and shaping, xeer law and its logics. This will involve the evaluation of the role of these online tools and the relevance and resilience of xeer in transnational justice. The practices in the transnational xeer, including the usage of legal precedents, the calculation of financial compensation to compensate victims, types of disputes and actors among Somalis in Johannesburg and Cape Town will be documented and analysed. The project will develop through ethnographic and explanatory qualitative approach. This will consist of in-depth interviews with fifty Somali elders in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and in Somalia, Mogadishu who digitally engage mediation of transnational business issues through Xeer. By doing so, the study will contribute to diverse disciplines including communication and media studies, migrant transnationalism and transnational law in socio-legal studies. It will open up to novel insights - a new scholarly enquiry that is empirically and theoretically sound and interesting to scholars in these fields.

Abutu Freeman Gabriel Adikwuoyi

Institution:Admiralty University of Nigeria
Location: Delta State, Nigeria
Biography: I gained a BA in history at the Benue State University Makurdi and, after nearly a decade of working predominantly in the business sector as a Field Sales Agent (FSA), MTN Nigeria, Benue South-East II, I also did an MA in History from the Benue State University Makurdi. This led to a PhD also in History from the same institution. Having taught as a part-time lecturer with my alumni within these periods, I moved to Coal City University Enugu Nigeria in 2018 to become an Assistant Lecturer and Programme Coordinator for History and Diplomatic Studies. In June 2020 however, I took the opportunity to leave these roles and pick up another full-time appointment as Lecturer II with Admiralty University of Nigeria Ibusa, Delta State, where I currently serve as Programme Examination Officer, Sectional Editor, Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (FAMSS) Multi-Disciplinary Journal. I already have experience and serve as an adviser and consultant to many scholarly works for individuals and organizations.

Paper Title: The Impact of MTN Mobile Money in advancing Financial Inclusion in Nigeria

Abstract: Digital platforms have permeated various aspects of African societies, revolutionizing economic activities, social interactions, and governance. However, scholarly research on platformization remains predominantly anchored in Western-centric perspectives, marginalizing African epistemologies and voices. This study investigates the role of MTN mobile money in advancing financial inclusion in Nigeria, exploring its impact

on underserved communities and the broader socio-economic landscape. As a leading mobile service provider in the country, MTN has the potential to empower Nigerians by providing access to affordable and convenient financial services. Drawing on a mixed methods approach that combines qualitative interviews, surveys, and transactional data analysis, this work examines the experiences and perspectives of MTN mobile money users, focusing on low-income individuals and rural communities. By assessing the services' effectiveness in addressing barriers to financial inclusion, such as physical distance to banks, high transaction costs, and limited success with formal financial institutions, the study evaluates the extent to which MTN mobile money contributes to the broader development goals of Nigerian society. The finding reveals that MTN mobile money has indeed facilitated financial inclusion for many Nigerians, enabling them to save, transfer, and receive funds securely and conveniently. This has positively impacted various aspects of user's lives, including entrepreneurship, education, and overall financial well-being. However, the study also identifies challenges that tend to hinder the service's potential impacts, such as limited digital literacy, network connectivity issues, and regulatory constraints, furthermore, the study highlights the importance of understanding the complex interplay of sociocultural, economic, and political factors that shape the adoption and use of mobile money services in Nigeria, by situating the case of MTN mobile money within the broader context of Nigeria's digital economy, which offers valuable insight into the role of digital platforms in promoting inclusive development. In conclusion, this research contributes to the on-going discourse on the potential of digital platforms to drive financial inclusion in Africa, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive analyses and multi-stakeholder collaboration to harness the transformative power of mobile money services like MTN. The findings provide important implications for policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers working to enhance the positive impacts of digital platforms on underserved communities across the continent.

Archimedes Muzenda

Institution: African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town
Location: Cape Town, South Africa
Biography: I am a PhD researcher at the African Centre for Cities (ACC), University of Cape Town under the Smartness as Wealth project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. In my doctoral work, I explore the inclusion and speculations of digital platforms innovations in the FinTech landscape of Nairobi. Prior to joining the ACC, I worked as a researcher at the Glensburg Cities Institute and as a fellow at the Brenthurst Foundation where I engaged in various projects that explored strategies for urban transformation in cities across Africa. I have published my work in various formats and key among the publications includes, Dystopia: How the Tyranny of Specialists Fragment African Cities (African Urban Institute

Press, 2019). I graduated from the University of Zimbabwe with a BSc in Regional and Urban Planning and an MPA Public Policy from Central European University.

Paper Title: The Logic of Platform Urbanism: Analysing Motorcycle Platformisation through Lefebvre's Spatial Triad

Abstract: Following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, platform urbanism burst into the scene in Nairobi as motorcycle-based logistics became popular with food-delivery and e-hailing services. With the proliferation of smartphone products and digital applications, platformisation of mobility and delivery services have become a major phenomenon in cities across Africa, particular Nairobi where motorcycle taxis (boda boda) are a major form of paratransit (Goodfellow, 2015). This research deep dive into the nature and extent of platformisation of motorcycle taxis. This research explores the relationship between platformisation of motorcycles and socio-spatial mobility in Nairobi. Using a mixed-methods approach, this paper seeks to understand better, ways in which platform companies conceive, represent, and perceive urban spaces. The study adopts ethnography complemented with network analysis based on primary data collected from in-depth interviews with platform companies and regulators, focus group discussions and a randomised questionnaire survey of motorcycle riders. Through the lens of Lefebvre's spatial triad, the paper analyses the platformisation of motorcycles in Nairobi. The explores how mobility platform companies commodify urban space as a spatial practice, how they conceive urban space through codification of space into numerical codes and how the resultant perceived space is speculative and expectative among the desires of the citizens and the global and local context in which the platform companies operate. The study hypothesises that through platformisation; urban space is disembodied, and is conceived as a commodity, which results in perceived space that is speculative and expectative among the various actors of platformisation.

Bashman Mohammed

Institution: University of Aberdeen/ The Solidarity Center
Location: Abuja, Nigeria
Biography: I am currently undertaking doctoral research within the framework of worker participation in corporate governance at the School of Law, University of Aberdeen through the distance learning route. I am also a Senior Program Officer with American Center for International Labor Solidarity where I coordinate the platform worker campaigns in Cote d' Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. As the focal person for the platform workers organizing campaign, I was at the forefront of the organizing drives that led to the official recognition of Amalgamated Union of App-Based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON) as the first App based worker union in Sub Sahara Africa. I am currently coordinating the strategic litigation

case before the Nigerian Court of Appeal Lagos Judicial Division over the misclassification of App based transporters on Uber and Bolt as independent contractors. I recently led a team of organizers and experts on an exploratory field visit to Accra to explore organizing opportunities for thousands of App-based workers in Ghana. A chapter in my ongoing PhD thesis is devoted to interrogating the borderline between a worker and an independent contractor in the face of continuous platformization of work.

Paper Title: Comparative Analysis of the Status of Platform Workers: Nigeria and South Africa in Focus

Abstract: Like in South Africa, a large portion of Nigerians have undertaken work through digital mediated platforms. Recent research findings reveal that Nigeria has the second-highest number of digital labour platforms on the African continent after South Africa. Suffice to mention that the emergence of these various platforms has brought about radical transformations of labour relationships and dissolution of traditional labour boundaries which have heightened the existential tensions between capital and labour. It is therefore not surprising that varying jurisprudence has been emerging on the status of persons operating on these digital labour platforms. An interesting but unresolved perspective to the platformization of work and its attendant consequences is the heavy reliance on Global North jurisprudence and contexts in standard setting and treatment of platform workers who are mostly misclassified as independent contractors. This research paper therefore attempts to address this gap through the lens of decided cases in Nigeria and South Africa. This research uses the mixed methods of desk review and case analysis. In the end, the findings set to provide clarity on the true status of platform workers within the contexts of African realities and their implications for countering the precarities associated with platformization of work.

Garth Malan

Institution: Centre for Sustainability Transitions, Stellenbosch University
Location: Cape Town, South Africa
Biography: I am a ECSA registered Professional Engineer and currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Sustainability Transitions at Stellenbosch University. I hold a BSc MechEng and MBA from UCT. My current research is concerned with the water, energy and food (WEF) nexus, and how it could be operationalized on a city scale towards urban resource security and resilience for Cape Town. By analysing the urban metabolism of the city, my research seeks to optimise resource pathways; support synergies, mitigate trade-offs and extend the life cycles of these resources in response to an ever-increasing demand faced with multi-faceted constraints.

Paper Title: The digitalization of resource flows for a WEF Nexus approach: the architecture of a decision-support platform

Abstract: The WEF nexus represents a mechanism of integrated governance, seeking to maximise the synergies and mitigate the trade-offs in resource management. WEF nexus tools form an operationalization bridge, linking the science to decision and policymaking, and is required to make sense of the deeply complex nature of these interconnected resources. Informed by a transdisciplinary and action research process, the authors have established the key requirements and considerations in developing a novel and generative WEF nexus tool that overcomes these issues, leveraging the insights and shortcomings of existing tools. Here we detail the architecture and analytics of a real-time, data-informed resource tracking and visualisation tool that converts resource data into strategic information, creating a shared understanding and removing information asymmetries. It is co-produced with the intended users and presented in a non-technical and spatial format, able to communicate to a range of stakeholders while also responding to their requirements. This therefore bridges the disconnect between science and policy, by producing a decision-support mechanism with instead of for stakeholders. The aim of this tool is to create a common platform for decision-makers, creating a quantified means to expose the systemic impact of sector-based decisions. Experimental scale deployments of this nature have shown that this exposure, organically motivates forms of collaboration and integrated governance, as proposed by the WEF nexus discourse. This paper describes the inputs, process and outputs of this platform, enabling its use in other contexts. Core to the input is the availability and accessibility of resource data. We will detail the data requirements, but also the process undertaken to acquire the data for the initial development. Followed by a description of how the various data sets are linked, analysed and then spatially linked to a map. This is concluded by the platform visualisation, informed by the decision-making requirements of the stakeholders involved in the pilot study in Cape Town.

Gatoni Alexis Sebarenzi

Institution: University of Geneva/University of Rwanda
Location: Geneva, Switzerland/Kigali, Rwanda
Biography: I am Alexis Gatoni SEBARENZI. I am a Rwandan doctoral candidate at the University of Geneva and a lecturer at the University of Rwanda (although officially on study leave). My ongoing doctoral thesis aims to investigate the "smartization" of the city of Kigali and its place in the urban statecraft in Kigali, Rwanda and places a central role to digital platforms. Before my doctoral thesis, I taught various modules on urban planning, urban economics and real estate finance. This is a position I held after completing my Masters in Global urban Development and Planning at the University of Manchester. In that capacity and with colleagues, I conducted research and published reports and academic papers on

various topics in urban studies including research on platforms. Noteworthy are the various research outputs on the project entitled Platform Politics and Silicon Savannahs (which can be found here and here). I was involved in consultancy work on urban planning for UN-HABITAT and the World Bank on the city of Kigali and other cities in Rwanda. Moreover, as an urban denizen in the city of Kigali, I have used and experimented with various platforms via apps, USSD code and websites whether for transport, nutrition, or government services.

Paper Title: Irembo: A digital gatekeeping institution and infrastructure

Abstract: The proliferation of digital platforms in the urban space has caught the attention of urban scholars leading to the parlance of platform urbanism which some scholars see as an evolution of smart cities with new forms of digital intermediation while others see as an example of actually existing smart city. Current scholarship has concentrated on the role that private (often multi-national) digital platforms play in the city. This paper focuses on the actual case of Irembo (translated as the gate in Kinyarwanda), a public digital platform for government services in Rwanda, the platform receives an average of 20000 applications per day and processed ten million applications last year. Using the case of Irembo, the paper argues that public urban digital platforms occupy a liminal space between infrastructure and institutions, which enables it to play the role of a 'gatekeeper' in urban governance. This liminal space is not fully captured by the descriptor of e-government because of the multiplicity of actors and their interrelationship with each other. Borrowing from Siciliano (2022) notion of the 'soft gate" and data (interviews, participant observations and spatial data) collected from different actors of Irembo Platform. I reflect on how Irembo controls and expands access to government services and in so doing alters particularly urban statecraft. This is done first by exploring special incorporation and contractual arrangements between the platform and the state in the form a BOT (Build Operate Transfer) and by the process of onboarding government services on the platform. Second, by layering the spatial access of the platform with other elements of splintering such as economic and education level. Third by exploring the relationship of the platform and its 'agents', those who tether it to the unconnected and exploring how they maintain and expand the platform. The paper then concludes by reflecting on the alterity brought in urban governance by the presence of the platform and how it interacts with the existing urban institutions.

Jack O. Odeo

Institution: University of Stockholm
Location: Stockholm, Sweden/Nairobi, Kenya
Biography: Doctoral candidate at the Department of Human Geography. Jack is a Kenyan scholar with research interests at the interface of technology studies, development studies

and Human Geography. He has participated in several research projects in urban Africa and co-authored several publications in highly rated academic journals. His doctoral research focuses on the emergence of new mega transport infrastructures in African cities.

Title: Digital highways: Bridging infrastructure gap through innovations

Abstract: African cities are undergoing a rapid infrastructural expansion in critical areas such as transport, energy, healthcare, and housing, demanding an annual investment of US$170 billion. In Nairobi, large-scale transport infrastructure projects dominate the urban landscape, while substantial investments in ICT have earned the city the title of one of Africa's Silicon Savannahs. Projects like the recently commissioned Nairobi Expressway are hailed as game changers, enhancing mobility and elevating Nairobi's status as a world-class city. These transformative structures, perceived as external impositions, are quickly integrated into the city's existing urban fabric, driven by digital technologies. This paper focuses on the operational domestication of large transport infrastructures into the platforms of everyday life in Nairobi.

Julie Zollmann

Institution: Independent/ Tufts University
Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Biography: I am an independent researcher based in Nairobi Kenya who studies the ways ordinary people interact with finance and technology and what that means for social change. Originally from the United States, Kenya has been my home since 2012, and I'm committed to being an active contributor to the local development research community here. My research uses mixed methods, seeks in-depth insights, covers extended periods of time, and is relational and engaged with participants and stakeholders around findings and implications. In my platform research, for example, I shared key findings with participants over YouTube, presented findings with driver associations and the Transport Workers' Union, held feedback sessions with Uber and Bolt, and continued to provide inputs where invited around policy implications. I am interested in the ways technology and platforms specifically are remaking relationships across many domains: finance, labour, health, and increasingly governance. What does restructuring of these interactions imply for who has power, who is worthy, and who thrives in our society?

Paper Title: No idle assets: Economics of digital driving in Nairobi

Abstract: In the global North, ride hailing firms, like Uber, have been deemed part of the 'sharing economy,' which theoretically puts idle or underutilized assets to use, helping owners leverage their assets for extra income. Ride hailing takes on a different character in

the global South, where capital is scarce and labor abundant. In Nairobi, car ownership is low; vehicles used for ride hailing are purchased explicitly as investments, often using loans. About 78% of active "digital drivers" do this work full-time. Fifty-one percent of drivers access a car by renting one on a fixed weekly fee. This paper draws on an original six-week panel survey of 450 drivers in late 2019 to show that these asset access arrangements have a profound effect on driver earnings. Returns to labor alone are low as benchmarked against minimum wage, comparison wages, and the local poverty line. Drivers work longer hours to cover the high fixed cost of vehicle rental or loan payments, making the work much less "flexible" than it is perceived in literature focused on the Global North.

Paper Title: Digitisation and Dignity: Ride hailing in Nairobi

Abstract: Why do digital drivers often assign a liberatory and dignifying significance to work that entails significant risk, low pay, long hours, and few labour protections? Drawing on 38 qualitative interviews and a survey of 450 digital drivers in Kenya, I show that in a context of high informality, drivers feel that digital driving offers potential dignity gains relative to other livelihoods. The same mechanisms that make drivers legible and controllable to capital—such as rating systems, background checks, and rule enforcement—also help make drivers legible as professionals to their high-status riders. Drivers' experience of dignity is increased by the partial formalization of their work and shifts in their social status. However, these gains are contingent upon rule enforcement and pay. While techniques of digitisation can enhance workers' experiences of dignity, structural aspects of the business model, absent regulation, and market dynamics can undermine gains.

Maxwell Okeyo

Institution: DayStar University
Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Biography: I am a media technology transformation professional and a strategist focused on human-centred design and innovation. I have held roles at Microsoft East Africa and Nation Media Group, where I spearheaded the digital transformation journey, guiding audiences towards new media and monetisation avenues. I am currently the Director of Digital Economy at SignHub Digital.I earned an Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation, an MBA in Strategic Management from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology with a focus on disruptive technologies, and a Bachelor of Science in Information Sciences from Moi University. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Business Administration, focusing on Strategic Management and Innovation. I have earned international executive programmes - the Senior Management Leadership Programme at Strathmore University, Expanding Business Horizons & Managing Diversity at Nanyang Technical University, Singapore. I am a certified Prosci Change Management practitioner and

a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. Known for identifying new business opportunities, developing strategic plans, and leading effective teams, I focus on measuring and monetising opportunities to deliver results that bolster organisational growth and sustainability. I bring a mix of business strategy and technology to create market opportunities and customer value. My expertise extends to Enterprise Change Management, Business Process Re-engineering, and leading various BPO initiatives. I have contributed as a member of the Security and ICT Committee at the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Africa Advisory Committee at the International News Media Association, always aiming to leverage my experience for broader industry impact.

Paper Title: Platformization in Africa: Navigating the Intersections of Innovation and Socio-Economic Transformation

Abstract: In the rapidly evolving landscape of African digital economies, platformization emerges as a crucial area of study, intertwining with the socio-economic fabric of the continent in unprecedented ways. This paper seeks to investigate the nuanced implications of digital platforms in African markets, with a particular focus on the integration and disruption they introduce to local ecosystems. I will draw upon my doctoral research on Strategic Management and Innovation, combined with my professional experience in leading digital economy strategies within the continent. The study will explore the dynamic interplay between digital platforms like Glovo and traditional African economic structures, examining how these platforms are not only filling gaps in the market but also creating new ones. In the context of platformization, Africa presents a unique case study: while it rapidly adopts global innovations, it simultaneously pioneers mobile finance platforms, such as M-Pesa, which have become nearly exclusive to its context. Through a multi-dimensional analysis, the paper will delve into platform-induced changes in labour, economy, state interaction, and everyday life, leveraging both quantitative data and qualitative insights. The methodology includes a comparative analysis of platform adoption across different African economies and the exploration of local responses to such shifts. Central to this examination is the consideration of Glovo's operational model and its adaptation to African markets, revealing challenges and opportunities in logistics, labour relations, and the inclusion of informal sectors. The paper will also address the broader implications of e-commerce platforms on urban planning, cultural norms, and regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, the role of African scholars in the global narrative of platform research will be highlighted, advocating for a shift from peripheral participation to central discourse leadership. This involves recognising the potential of home-grown platforms and the necessity of formulating African-based solutions to the challenges of digitalisation. The expected outcome of this research is to contribute to the establishment of a more balanced global understanding of platformization, where African experiences and innovations are adequately represented and valorised. It aspires to bridge the existing knowledge gap and foster dialogue among international scholars on the unique

developments in the African digital platform space. By aligning with the workshop's objectives, this paper aims to refine academic writing approaches within the platformization discourse, identify avenues for accessing global publishing platforms, develop a distinctive analytical style enriched by an African perspective, and create a collaborative network for on-going knowledge exchange and research advancement. Ultimately, this research intends to articulate a framework for understanding African digital platformization, addressing the intrinsic motivations, barriers, and impacts associated with its rise, thereby informing policy and offering a roadmap for future scholarly investigation.

Mohamed Muse

Institution: Leiden University/ University of Lagos
Location: The Hague, Netherlands
Biography: I am a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Faculty of Governance of Global Affairs, Leiden University. I have an MA in Development Studies from the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam and a BA in Community Development from the University of Bosaso. Prior to my doctoral candidacy, I worked with different international development and migration-focused projects and programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Currently, I am a research fellow at the Centre of Diversity and Migration and a Research Associate at the African Diaspora Policy Centre. I am also a research affiliate at the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, University of Lagos. Throughout my career, I have presented my work in different forums and international conferences, including the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) and the Political Studies Association (PSA).

Paper Title: The Political Economy of Mobile Money Platform Regulations in Somali Territories

Abstract: Mobile money platforms are the biggest everyday financial platforms that many Somalis use. 82% of the Somali population uses mobile money platforms for financial transactions (Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). These platforms are provided by telecommunication companies and remittance service providers. These platforms are unique in that they mostly serve Somalis in Somalia and the diaspora. Despite the absence of a well-functioning and internationally connected banking sector, Somalis benefit from their digital mobile money platforms to send and receive money and remittances. These platforms are even used by the government and other organizations in the country to pay the salaries of their staff. The largest platforms that provide these services are Zaad, Sahal, and EVC. Each of these platforms has its requirements and has a complete regulatory structure that these service providers use to secure the information and the money of their customers. The article that I envision developing during the 'platform workshop' focuses on what I call

everyday mobile money platform regulations in Somali territories. The articles focus on three large platforms—i.e., Zaad, Sahal, and EVC to unpack their regulatory frameworks. The article asks questions such as: How are these platforms regulated? Who develops those regulatory frameworks? What role do international financial institutions play in the development of the regulatory frameworks that guide Somalia's mobile money platforms? Methodologically, the article uses data collected from multi-site fieldwork in three major Somali territories. These three territories are Somaliland, Puntland, and South-Central Somalia. The data was collected over 18 months in those three Somali territories. The article uses qualitative interviewing and observations as the major methods of data collection. Theoretically, the article uses 'financial governmentality' and 'everyday platform regulation' as well as theories of informal institutions. * The article's arguments are threefold. To begin with, mobile money platforms in Somali territories are everyday financial platforms for sending and receiving money and remittances. Additionally, these platforms act as financial inclusion for the Somali population and connect Somalia to the rest of the world financially. Despite the claims that frame Somali mobile money and remittance platforms as unregulated and sources of illicit finances, the article argues that the Somali mobile money platforms have complex regulatory structures (supported by both formal and informal institutions in Somali territories) that secure them from abuses both domestically and internationally. This is shown using empirical data on the mobile money regulatory frameworks in three major Somali territories. The article contributes to the extremely thin literature on Somali mobile money and remittance platforms.

Raymond Onuoha

Institution: University of the Witwatersrand
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa
Biography: My name is Raymond Onuoha. I am a Technology Policy Scholar and Consultant. My research focuses on the institutional and policy challenges in the evolution of the digital economy and technology innovation in developing countries, with a specialization on Africa. My expertise covers the domain areas of digital transformation and innovation, Internet governance, e-governance, platformization, digital identity, telecommunications policy and artificial intelligence (AI) policy. I also work as a Research Consultant with regional ICT policy and regulation think-tanks – Research ICT Africa (RIA), South Africa, IT4Change (India), and The Portulans Institute (Washington D.C., USA) - conducting multidisciplinary research on digital governance, policy and regulation and the facilitation of evidence-base to inform policymaking for improved access, use and application of digital technologies for social and economic development in Africa. I was a Doctoral Fellow of the IDRC Award (2018), which aims to build emerging leaders in communications policy in the Global South, and a Young Scholar Fellow for the Communications Policy Research South Conference, which took place in Mozambique in 2018. Currently, I am a Post-doctoral

Fellow at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), South Africa - where I am assessing high-integrity and trust digital identification schemes across Africa.

Paper Title: Invisible Innovation: Enterprise Platform Innovation in Africa
A Biographical Assessment within the Nigerian Platform Ecosystem

Abstract: The African platform ecosystem is a rapidly growing market that is projected to contribute nearly $200 billion to the region's economy by 2025, depending on the level of digital technologies usage by businesses and a complementary mix of optimal policies – attracting significant interests from global technology players. However, the importance of platform localization is requiring these global technology companies to increasingly build and update their platform products and services for African users, considering contextual user demographics and behaviour in congruence with the different levels of digital readiness. Within this purview, the regional platform ecosystem in Africa is quite diverse - with Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, and Kenya as the leading hubs. These leading hubs are the epicentres of digital infrastructure build-out, private sector investments, technology adoption, technology talent, and tech start-up evolution across the continent. Nevertheless, most the value creation is typically around intermediation and information processing, and less around digital production. Furthermore, the commercial sustainability and scale of innovation driven by these tech players within the African ecosystem is significantly influenced and constrained by the existing socio-economic context. Consequently, enterprise platform innovation in Africa remains invisible and unknown at a global scale. For global technology companies in Africa, innovation – typically limited to the adaptation of global products to the technical and business challenges of the local context – can pose considerable strains. Delivering to customers the expected standard of quality, within a context that platform products were not designed nor developed for; requires considerable investments, extensive knowledge and high levels of skill. Yet, such innovations tend to leave no trace within the development trajectories of global enterprise software products. This paper seeks to redress this knowledge gap by developing an understanding how enterprise platform innovation unfolds in Africa as a blend of global and local innovation practices, inscribed in software artefacts with protracted lifecycles. The evolution of enterprise platforms reflects the development path of African industries and the global integration of those industries with respect to the possibilities that these contextual experiences may feed back into future global technology supply. Therefore, understanding and guiding the direction of enterprise platform innovation in Africa is key to charting economic development on the continent. Enterprise platform innovation matters because it brings about future possibilities and impossibilities for African economies on their path towards development. The empirical approach for the paper is anchored in the traditions of strategic ethnographic studies. The author will engage multinational enterprises such as SAP, Cisco, Oracle, Microsoft, HP, IBM, Salesforce, Huawei; African innovation labs of software giants; and indigenous African enterprise platform companies. Liaising with such stakeholders, the

author will develop a catalogue of enterprise platform products and the discourses surrounding their evolution. Ethnographic work will be channelled into African biographical accounts of 30 – 40 software artefacts, using the biography approach as enunciated by Pollock and Williams (2009). The Part A of this study analyzes the Nigerian enterprise platform innovation ecosystem.

Reginald Arthur

Institution: University of Ghana
Location: Accra, Ghana
Biography: I am an early career academic and a PhD candidate at the University of Ghana, currently investigating the music streaming ecosystem in Ghana. My research aims to uncover the resources and regulatory frameworks that underpin the music industry in the country. As I prepare to submit my final work, my research interests extend across various domains including public policy, leadership, digitalization, informal economy, strategic management, and organizational behaviour. I specialize in multidisciplinary research at the intersection of these fields. My doctoral thesis has sparked a keen interest in the creative and informal economy in Africa, and in the media industries, particularly focusing on music streaming. As a result, I am actively involved in exploring the dynamics of music streaming platforms and their impact on the music industry. In addition to my research pursuits, I contribute to the scholarly community as a reviewer for the Journal of African Business and serve on the Editorial Review Board of the Leadership and Organization Development Journal. Furthermore, I have gained valuable experience through participation in consultancy projects, further enriching my understanding of organizational dynamics and strategic management.

Paper Title: To Regulate or Deregulate: Exploring Emerging Trends of Digital Colonialism in Music Streaming in Africa

Abstract: In the paper of Bodrožić and Adler (2022), four scenarios were identified as shaping the future trajectory of information and communication technology (ICT) revolution and digital transformation – digital oligarchy, digital authoritarianism, digital localism, and digital democracy – and most real-world cases about countries' experiences of digital transformation were predicted to be situated within this grid. What was conspicuously missing in their discourse, however, were traces about Africa's digital experience and where that could lead to its ICT revolution. The concept of digital colonialism has been particularly used in reference to the digital experience of African countries as large-scale tech companies from developed economies exploit the digital landscape and data of Africa for profit, influence, and dominance with little returns to the source (Coleman, 2019). Such exploitation tendencies are currently among the major contentions for technology adoption

in the creative industries especially with the emergence of new media such as music streaming. Currently, creative arts scholars (e.g., Hartley et al., 2017; Hesmondhalgh, 2020) are contending how we could move from 'technological determinism' where technology drives or determines change in the creative arts industry to a state of 'social construction of technology' where the users and creators of creative products are active determiners of the economic and social outcomes of their works. For African countries, these conversations are even more complex when the pursuit of creative value from digital platforms must navigate across issues of regulatory complexities, tendencies of technological exploitation and representation. This study therefore explores the intersection of regulatory frameworks and digital colonialism in the context of music streaming in Africa. It delves into the policy choices facing African governments regarding the regulation of streaming services, considering options such as local content quotas, taxation, and market-oriented approaches. Understanding the implications of these regulatory frameworks is crucial as large-scale tech companies from developed economies exploit the digital landscape and data of Africa for profit, influence, and dominance with little returns to the source. Drawing from decolonial theories and institution-based theory (Peng et al., 2009), this study revisits debates about regulating or deregulating music streaming, akin to past discussions on criminalizing or tolerating piracy (de Beukelaer, 2017; de Beukelaer & Fredriksson, 2018). Using country-specific examples and primary evidence from Ghana's music regulatory environment, this study critically discusses the concept of digital colonialism prevailing through music streaming across some African countries. The study analyses how regulatory frameworks could either support or impede the advancement of value generation for creative actors. The original contribution of this study lies in its critical analysis of regulation and/or deregulation as anti-colonial tools for music streaming in Africa.

Saratu Mshelia

Institution: University of Cape Town
Location: Cape Town, South Africa
Biography: I am Saratu Mshelia, and I recently completed the M.Phil. program in Southern Urbanism at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town. Throughout my academic journey, I have developed a strong interest in exploring the intersection between technology and urban development, focusing on the digital transformation of African cities. I am passionate about understanding how digitalisation can empower communities, drive sustainable growth, and promote inclusive governance within urban environments across the continent. My research interest is deeply rooted in a drive to understand the unique challenges and opportunities brought about by rapid urbanization and technological advancements in Africa. Through interdisciplinary approaches, continuous learning, collaborations, and research, my goal is to contribute to the on-going discourse on digitalization and digital ethics in the field of urban studies in the region.

Paper Title: The Use of Social Media Platforms for Activism: Strategies for Navigating the Digital Divide

Abstract: Almost every aspect of life today is integrated into the digital sphere in one form or another. From education to healthcare, finance, and media, digitalization has transformed patient care, payment and banking systems, as well as information sharing via digital platforms. The ability to access and navigate the digital world I increasingly seen as a fundamental human right. Advocacy and activism are no exception as the internet has enabled social media platforms in particular to support social movements in promoting their activities to a wider network beyond their local context. However, access to these technologies and the literacy to effectively utilize them for personal or organizational advancement is unequal among movements. This digital divide leads to the perpetuation of existing socio-economic inequalities, making it difficult for marginalized movements to fully utilize the opportunities that digitalization offers despite movements employing several strategies to navigate the challenges they encounter due to limited digital literacy and access. This paper examines how such strategies are employed by Reclaim the City (RTC), in collaboration with Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU), to advocate for affordable housing in Cape Town. This case study was conducted between 2022 and 2023 and the data was collected through semi-structured interviews, document study, and the archiving of the movements' Facebook page. The findings indicate that RTC faces significant challenges mobilizing digital resources and the digital skills necessary to independently drive their housing campaign on social media. However, they leverage their partnership with Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) to maintain a social media presence, utilising the skills available within NU to manage their social media account. The findings provide insight into the impact of the digital divide, revealing how low-income social movements like RTC are unable to fully utilize digital resources and how such digital access disparities can easily reinforce marginalisation, by affecting online visibility and digital civic participation. More so, when coping strategies, such as partnerships with organizations such as NU are not available. In conclusion, recommendations are made to invest towards digital literacy for low-income communities, as well as last-mile connectivity to address the issue of the digital divide and ensure an inclusive urban future.

Smith Ouma

Institution: University of Manchester
Location: Manchester, United Kingdom
Biography: I am currently a Leverhulme Early Career Researcher at the Global Development Institute. Prior to this role, I was a post-doctoral research fellow with the FCDO-funded African Cities Research Consortium. With a background in Law, my research is inherently interdisciplinary spanning legal geography, urban politics, urban health, and

development studies. My primary focus lies in understanding the political economy of informal settlements and systems failings in cities, particularly in Africa. As part of this interest, I have engaged with multiple actors to understand how power is performed and how interests emerge and compete in informal settlements contexts. I also look at the everyday practices of marginalised urban residents to understand how agency is exercised, and the different strategies and tools that are employed to realize rights in the city. Additionally, I have strong research and professional interest in the field of land law.

Paper Title: Unpacking the political economy of land data assemblages and information systems in low-income urban contexts

Abstract: All data assemblages function within a political economy. But this is seldom acknowledged when it comes to construction of land data and land information systems. Conversely, these have largely been treated as neutral-technical processes that are regulated by formalist logics of the state and development actors supporting land reforms, particularly in cities located in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). Considerations on the legal and institutional frameworks are often disregarded with more attention being directed at technical elements relating to how registrable claims can be captured. In this way, the place of politics in land and other information systems is often downplayed with more focus being placed on technical mechanisms to "improve" data infrastructures neglecting the broader national and local contexts that shape data systems and infrastructures. The dearth in more politically grounded analyses impairs our capacity to unpack how the assemblages interface to produce certain property configurations. Moreover, it hinders our ability to understand 'situated practices' and strategies employed by the excluded in the city to negotiate for more representation in the ways that land and land information systems are constructed, and to identify points of consensus and contention between communities and other actors in the assemblages. This is especially pertinent in informal settlements contexts where land and other assemblages are often birthed in a vortex of layered and competing claims to space and are driven by a diverse set of discursive formulations. Increasingly, there has been a growing number of scholarships which examine how power, in its various dimensions, feeds back into politics and the bearing that this has on given data rationalities infrastructures that are adopted. From this literature, a range of approaches have been proposed which enable the analysis of power and politics in assemblages. One approach unpacks power in assemblages through the assessment of the discursive construction of spatial imaginaries by urban social movements. Other scholars have focused on the material infrastructures or systems elaborating on how these contain what he referred to as "political properties". There is also a school of thought is of the view that power should be understood by opening up the "black boxes" of data assemblages which can provide us with an idea of the negotiations that inform the choices of given data systems. Engaging in such an exercise, they argue, might offer a pathway for more grounded accounts which facilitate a more incisive understanding of the heterogeneous assemblages at play in the city. Building

upon the genealogy of scholarship briefly introduced above, this paper elucidates the "on the ground processes" operating in two informal settlements to produce specific configurations of land data and property rationalities. Mathare in Nairobi and Kwa Bullo in Mombasa offer critical entry points for engaging with subaltern perspectives which can elevate our understanding of how assemblages of land data in informal settlements contexts are structured by relations of power, discursive formulations, and resource control.

Tabitha Osoro

Institution: Moi University
Location: Eldoret, Kenya
Biography: My name is Tabitha Kwamboka Osoro, currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Moi University. I hold a Master of Music Education from Kabarak University and a Bachelor of Education (Arts) Second Class Honors, Upper Division from Kenyatta University. Being an early career researcher, I am privileged to be part of a research project titled, "Beyond the Digital Return: New Heritage(s), sustainability and decolonization of Music Archives in Kenya, Ghana and South Africa". This project is affiliated to African Cluster Centre, which is a component of, Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at University of Bayreuth, Germany. The project's activities stimulated a strong desire to investigate digital archiving platforms and practices in the context of music performance, heritagization and education. I am a music educator, and a passionate advocate for African musical heritage preservation, and enhancing access to culturally responsive music education resources. Specifically, I am interested in how best to utilize digital repositories to enhance exposure of Kenyan learners to music of their communities, and support music educators in developing innovative methods of teaching music.

Paper Title: Platformization and the growth of Kenyan creative economies: an exploration of challenges and opportunities presented by Mdundo Platform

Abstract: In recent years, the global creative economy has experienced significant expansion propelled by the advent of digital platformization. Notably, platforms such as social media, streaming services, and online marketplaces have emerged as potent tools for Kenyan artists, offering accessible and scalable avenues to showcase their work to a worldwide audience while directly engaging with their fanbase. Furthermore, innovative initiatives have led to the development of more tailored platforms addressing the specific needs of Kenyan and African artists. In Kenya, this trend is exemplified by the emergence of distribution platforms like Mdundo, aimed at empowering African musicians and promoting fair compensation in the music industry. Having been founded by Martin Nielsen and Francis Amisi as a free music service, this platform draws musicians from different parts of Africa and has immensely revolutionized ways in which artists connect with audiences,

collaborators, and economic opportunities, introducing new approaches to commercial engagement within the creative sphere. An early observation highlights the democratizing impact of the Mdundo platform, particularly in its ability to level the playing field for artists and consumers from marginalized backgrounds. This is achieved through offering a digital platform for distributing their work and facilitating connections with potential collaborators and patrons. Mdundo empowers artists to expand their reach and monetize their creativity in previously unattainable ways. However, amidst these opportunities, there persist various challenges surrounding platformization within the Kenyan context. These include issues surrounding digital literacy, internet accessibility, and data privacy, which disproportionately affect artists in rural and marginalised areas. Additionally, issues arise regarding copyright infringement and sustainability of revenue models on platforms like Mdundo, as well as the equitable distribution of profits among creators and platform owners. This paper endeavors to explore the intricate dynamics of platformization within Kenya's creative industries, with a specific focus on the challenges and opportunities presented by the Mdundo platform. Employing a mixed methods approach, incorporating qualitative interviews with artists and quantitative analysis of platform data, the study aims at offering a comprehensive understanding of how Mdundo has reshaped the creative economy landscape in Kenya. Insights obtained from interviews with artists, and industry insiders will provide valuable perspectives on the platform's impact on their professional practices, income generation, and market access. Through a nuanced examination of these complexities, this research seeks to enrich our understanding of the relationship between platformization and Kenya's creative economy. The implications of these findings extend to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and platform developers navigating the evolving terrain of digital innovation in the arts. Ultimately, this study aims to inform strategies for fostering the sustainable growth and inclusivity of Kenya's dynamic creative sectors within an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Venolia Rabodiba

Institution: Department of Anthropology, Stanford University
Location: Stanford, California, United States
Biography: I am a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. I am writing a doctoral dissertation on regional integration in southern Africa in a moment of historic investment in transnational and intra-regional connectivity infrastructures. I explore the social, cultural, and technological strategies that enable the contradictory political and economic infrastructuralizations of a more integrated Africa to be maintained, separated, blurred, and contested.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts Honours (with distinction) in Geography from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg where I was a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow. I was

Paper Title: Sovereign Optics: Sociotechnical Regimes, Seeing, and Verification in Customs Processing

Abstract: Customs processing and customs clearance is a sovereign practice. It is concerned with the management of circulations in a regulatory zone. This management of circulations – decisions about what goods can cross a border, in what quantity, and at what price – depends on sovereign accounting performed by customs officials on behalf of a nation's revenue authority at a border. This paper is based on ethnographic research in the customs terminal and the scanner control room of Kazungula One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) at the border between Zambia and Botswana, one of the busiest border terminals along sub-Saharan Africa's North-South Corridor. An OSBP is a premiere border concept, a new infrastructural arrangement which enables dual customs processing in a shared control zone. Kazungula OSBP is an infrastructural perfection of what borders of the future in southern Africa are deigned to look like in projects that promote regional integration through the facilitation of trade. As part of its infrastructural makeover, Kazungula received the latest technologies, systems, and platforms for more efficient clearance of goods and seamless movement of commercial traffic. Amongst these is a new tool for customs verification, the use of a new x-ray scanner which sends fluoroscopic images to the customs processing platform (ASYCUDA World) which keeps data about incoming and outgoing cargo. In this paper, I illustrate customs processing as a regime that relies almost entirely on seeing and as regime regulated by data entries on a digital platform. I consider what the introduction of new modes of seeing and what the use of new digital systems and platforms means for the practice of sovereignty. Emerging concepts are sovereign optics as new eyes of platform states.